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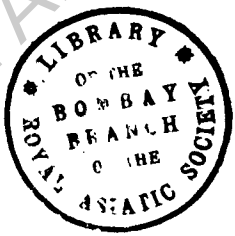
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THROUGH INDIA WITH THE PRINCE



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MAUSOLEUM OF HAIDAR ALI AND TIPPU SULTAN.

THROUGH INDIA WITH THE PRINCE

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BY

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'SONGS OF MODERN GREECE,' 'THE TALE OF A TOUR IN MACEDONIA,' ETC.

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

THE author has accompanied Their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales on their Indian tour as special correspondent of the Calcutta *Statesman*. He is still in India, so that the proof-sheets of the book have not had the advantage of his revision, and the reader's indulgence is craved for any errors that may have escaped notice.

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ERRATA

Page 109, line 4, *for* 'months' *read* 'moments.'
Page 183, line 7 from bottom, *for* 'three millions' *read* 'thirteen millions.'
Page 187, line 17, *for* 'Ough' *read* 'Oudh.'

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MAP TO ILLUSTRATE THE ROYAL TOUR.

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THROUGH INDIA WITH THE PRINCE

CHAPTER I

BOMBAY

A TINY peninsula, almost an island, of bright-coloured quaintness, rising out of the Arabian waters, its hem fringed with rugged palm-clad islets, bold promontories, and busy docks, amid which the white wings of countless sailing vessels glide, flashing in the sunlight. Behind them bristle the masts of bigger craft, and columns of black smoke are belched forth from grimy funnels. This is Bombay, 'The Eye of India,' viewed from the sea—a picture of many brilliant colours and many promises, embedded in green foliage and framed by the distant blue range of the Western Ghats. And as the eye dwells upon this entrancing picture, the mind wanders back to the Queen of the Adriatic and her departed greatness. You are tempted to describe Bombay the Beautiful as the Venice of the East—a Venice robbed of her canals and her campanile and the songs of ever-enamoured gondoliers, but rich in a charm of a subtler and stranger sort.

Such is the first impression of the capital of the western Presidency of British India—a vast tract of territory once partitioned among many independent realms of unrest, now comprising twenty-four quiet British districts and a score of native States, whose rulers enjoy a safe, if limited, freedom under the British ægis. It stretches on the north to Baluchistan and the Punjab; on the east to the Mahratta

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State of Indore, the Central Provinces, and the dominions of the Nizam of Hyderabad; on the south to the Presidency of Madras and the State of Mysore—all of them lands which we will visit at our leisure, if the gods permit.

Meanwhile this city, in its history and present population, is a shorthand summary of the whole province, and, indeed, of a great deal more. At the time when it came to King Charles II., as part of the dowry of a Portuguese bride, Bom Bahia, or the Beautiful Bay, was an insignificantly picturesque cluster of islets, with a sparse population living on dried fish, cocoanuts, and golden sunsets. To-day, second to Calcutta in size, it surpasses all cities, not only of the Indian Empire, but of the world, in wealth and in variety of human types. Within its twenty-five square miles of brick and stone and painted wood are packed three-quarters of a million of Oriental souls—packed more densely than are the thousands which languish in the slums of London—house pressed against house, and each house in itself a colony of families.

There is no creed, no caste, no colour, no costume, on earth which does not contribute its note to this motley symphony. As you look out of your window you see the streets below swarming with all the shades of complexion that the skin of man is capable of: from the blackest coffee of the tropics, through the intermediate gradations of chocolate-brown, to the pale amber of Central Asia. For, though the soul of Hindustan may be uniformly dark, her children are of all colours. As you elbow your way through the busy, crowded bazaars, you collide with absent-minded Jains, still firmly attached to the Buddhist chimeras which formed the established religion throughout the Indian peninsula two thousand years ago—a small remnant of a host once mighty; with self-admiring Brahmans, the solemn exponents of an even more hoary orthodoxy; with despised and in many ways despicable Sudras; with the more cordially despised, and in a greater variety of ways despicable, pariahs—pessimistic-looking, sullen wretches, yet the only people who in this land of

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self-inflicted bondage could call their souls their own, had they any; with followers of the Prophet of Mecca—hawk-eyed Arabs, soft Persians, dignified Turks, aquiline Afghans, vivacious Malays—in their green, gold-broidered turbans, red fezes, or brown coils wound round white headkerchiefs, in their black beards, and imperturbable self-respect; with haughty Mahrattas, in towering red and white head-dresses; with vulpine banias, or traders, in conical crimson turbans; with keen-nosed, cash-absorbed and absorbing Jews; with shrewd Armenians, undistinguished Christian converts, ebony-faced negroes, poor and cheerful; with Chinese, pig-tailed, prosperous, and mournful; with trousered and topee'd supercilious Europeans; and those unfortunate mistakes who in their name, as well as in their complexion, dress, and character, constitute a curious coalition between Europe and Asia—the hapless, casteless Eurasians, children of both continents and recognised by neither. I wonder what it means to be the disinherited of two worlds.

(But, beyond question, the most notable unit in this congeries of nations is the colony of Parsis—some 50,000 sleek disciples of Zoroaster in upright mitres of glossy black cardboard and black frock-coats, who, expelled from Iran in the days of yore by the two-edged sword of Ali, drifted to these shores, whither they have carried, along with their headgear, their faith, their aloofness, and their aptitude for financial enterprise—all these qualities intensified by the loss of political independence. To this colony Bombay owes the largest measure of her prosperity.)

(The Parsis are the Jews of the East—conspicuous out of all proportion to their numbers, clever, mutually helpful, jealous of their tribal distinctions, abhorring proselytes, rigidly tenacious of essentials, yielding in matters of detail, supple, versatile, munificent, and patriotic in a parochial sense. They are strangers in the land of their fathers, and, after twelve centuries' sojourn, still aliens in that of their adoption. Everywhere and nowhere at home, everywhere and nowhere powerful, these worshippers of Ormuzd

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and his rival live in profound social isolation, tempered by the commercial exploitation of their neighbours.

Thus they live in their elegant suburban villas on the sea-girt slopes of Malabar Hill, comfortably; and, when they die, they are neither burnt like the Hindus nor buried like the Mahomedans and Christians, but they are exposed on those grim Towers of Silence which stand—low, sullen blocks of gray stone—on the gray rocks overlooking the western ocean. Green trees grow in strange abundance out of these gray rocks, shrouding the slopes and surrounding the gloomy sepulchres. But these trees, like the rocks and the towers, suggest, not life, but the grave.

The sun had just sunk in the Arabian Sea as, having passed through the rows of elegant villas, I reached the mournful summit of the hill. The silence was deafening. Suddenly a flight of black carrion-crows arose out of the trees and hovered for a while over one of the towers, cawing hoarsely. Then it was all silence again, and on the top of a palm, silhouetted against the burning gold of the sky, I discerned a pair of vultures. They stood still, as though carved out of the dark rocks, waiting for their supper, or already torpid with excess of human meat.

As I drove downhill again between the elegant suburban villas, I could not help reflecting that their inmates would one of these days be laid out on yon sullen square blocks of gray stone—ladies and gentlemen—a nice, well-nourished feast for the fowls of heaven, thus emphasizing the amiable doctrine that even in death there can be no union or intercommunion between the Zoroastrian shades and those of ordinary mortals. What will become of this exclusive tribe when India is thoroughly roused to national consciousness the remote future will show. Meanwhile their spiritual arrogance prevents not the Parsis of India, any more than it prevents the Jews of Europe, from enjoying the favour of the powers that be by their ostentatious loyalty and the tolerance of their fellow-citizens by their elasticity.

Two things, however, I admire about the Parsis—their

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women and their manners. The former, alone among Eastern ladies, have the moral courage to expose their faces to God's free air and light, and, though not thrillingly beautiful, those faces have no reason to be ashamed of themselves. They are very delicate, these ladies of Persian blood, and very graceful. Graceful and delicate also are their gossamer veils—light blue, pink, sea-green, lilac, or primrose—flowing in front and behind in soft rivulets of silky sheen and shade. The politeness of both men and women is remarkable even in this politest part of the earth. The desire to please is inborn in the Oriental. A high-caste Hindu servant addresses the outcast sweeper, whose mere contact defiles, as 'Jemindar,' and the cook as 'Sardar,' both titles of military rank.

These amenities form part of that general urbanity which the suspicious North European is apt to mistake for dishonesty or servility, and to enjoy cynically or to resent violently, according to his temperament and breeding, but to understand never. In a lesser degree it is the same with the races of Southern Europe—those sunny races with their exuberant cordiality and love for the superlative, of whom the Parsis often remind one. It seems as though these ancient nations, while losing some of the robust virtues of their civilized forefathers, have retained this inalienable heritage of civilization—courtesy, a treasure which we have not yet acquired, or which, if some of us have acquired it as an accomplishment, has not yet become an instinct.

Do we not labour under the barbarously conscientious delusion that a poetical exaggeration is a lie? Do we not very often, in our terrible anxiety to speak not more than the truth, succeed in speaking less? We call this self-restraint. It is a good name; it may even, for aught I know, represent a good thing. But it does not help to make us more lovable or loved. The difference is, of course, most unpleasantly forced upon one when he meets the Insolents abroad, and nowhere more than here in Bombay, where I have had the opportunity of seeing the

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British tourist amazing and amusing the native mind, which he strives to impress, with his unutterable knicker-bockers and his 'no d——d nonsense about me' air.

Such are the constituent members of this humming, bewildering bee-hive called Bombay. The only things they seem to have in common are earnestness in the pursuit of lucre and a strong conviction frankly entertained by each sect that all the others are unclean. 'Touch me not' is the motto inscribed in letters invisible and indelible on the pediment of this strange edifice of many tints and many orders. And yet, as a matter of fact, the peace is rarely broken. It is only on holy and festive occasions that the police have some difficulty in preserving good humour and order among the worshippers of a thousand incongruous and antagonistic gods, inebriated with religious fervour and other fountains of enthusiasm. On such occasions outbursts of violence come to mar the normally harmonious discord, and then, the gentle arts of persuasion proving inadequate, there is much shaking of turbans and wagging of tongues at the law, as personified by those creatures in flat yellow coifs, whose dark blue jackets and breeches, tucked up at the knees, bare brown legs, and sandalled feet, are visible everywhere, suggesting sailors ready to swab the earth clean of petty sin.

On closer acquaintance with the town your superficial recollections of the West grow even more vivid. The European residents and their indigenous imitators appear to have fallen in with the eclectic genius of the place, their Renaissance houses, their cafés, their spired churches, reminding one of Marseilles or Alexandria rather than of India, and even the Government has made a courageous effort to bring itself into some harmony with its environment by building its monster Secretariat in a kind of architecture, half Venetian, half Gothic, which successfully combines the characteristic puerilities of both orders. The University also rears its Gothic clock-tower to the sky of Asia unashamedly, and some of the hotels strive

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to reconcile Gothic gables with Saracenic domes and arches. But the benevolent sun of the East shines tranquilly upon the congruous and the ridiculous alike, glorifying all, smiling politely upon all. He is as well bred as any other native of Bombay, and as unlike as possible the Anglo-Indian official of a rank sufficiently middling to encourage the belief that it is a substitute for breeding.

I am in the native bazaar. Both sides of the street are lined with shops, standing as close to one another as the books in a well-ordered library, and presenting as great a variety in dress and contents. Many-coloured stuffs are measured out here by fat merchants to fat customers. The dry fragrance of Eastern spices emanates from the boxes and bottles next door. Here are sweets weighed out, and there jewels of gold and silver sparkle through the dusk. And the place is alive with the bustle and the buzz of bargaining and the whirl of wheels. Fashionable landaus clatter past, carrying rich Parsi ladies and gentlemen, gold-turbaned mollahs, Zoroastrian high-priests, all white, or pink-turbaned princes. The tramway also rattles down the middle of the road, cutting —the gods and the drivers only know how—its way safely through the crowd.

But more picturesque than carriage or tramcar is the gilt Noah's ark kind of vehicle drawn by a pair of obese bullocks, their yard-long horns covered with gold-leaf, their humps wobbling majestically, their necks jingling with bells and amulets. Under the awning of the ark I see two solemn boys sitting stiff in brocade of gold, and two or three little girls equally stiff, yet gay.

From amidst the shops on right and left rise houses climbing on elaborately-carved pillars to the height of four or five handsome stories—dwellings of merchant princes worth many lakhs of rupees—fanned and shaded by the green richness of the peepul and the plantain, or beautified by the jejune elegance of the palm. And

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behind this fringe of magnificence spreads the broad mantle of misery, noisy, noisome, nauseating.

Did not even Venice in the day of her glory have her Ghetto? But what is any slum of Europe beside these Eastern abodes of ancient filth and multiform wretchedness?

Impelled by a morbid craving to see the other side of things—the side of reality, which mere Princes are not privileged to see—I leave the main street and plunge into the narrow lanes, seething with a hookah-smoking, betel-chewing humanity, buying and selling or only bargaining, whining and worshipping in a medley of unfathomable squalor. The lower parts of the houses are open cupboards, in which petty tradesmen and artisans squat on their haunches, all but naked, puffing, sleeping, perspiring in malodorous idleness. On the grimy balconies overhead lounge women in all degrees of dusky undress, and to the rickety rails cling little boys and girls who have not yet exchanged their innocence for a loin-cloth. And between these rows of dwellings flows on the turbid, maddening stream of tumult which in the East passes for business.

Suddenly the clangour of a bell breaks upon the clamour of the people. I am before a temple. An attempt to penetrate into the holy interior is met by a chorus of devotees gesticulating with unambiguous unanimity that I am a being polluted and polluting.... I did not endeavour to undeceive them. Instead, I looked round from the gateway and beheld enough to cure me of any desire to behold more. On one side of the peepul-shaded quadrangle stand the sacred bulls, immeasurable monsters of no shape, whose sole aim in life appears to be its prolongation and its propagation. On the opposite side spreads a low-browed, many-arched cloister, a number of cells opening on to it. Each dim cell enshrines a glittering god or goddess, many-armed, many-legged, animal-headed, hideous. In the passage bronze monsters lie couchant, while the worshippers, ministers, and idlers of

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the temple keep up an incessant concert of delirious discord.

In the middle of this enclosure saunter several saints with long black hair, black beard, and a coat of gray ashes for their main attire. A long string of big wooden beads hangs from the neck, and a staff is brandished in one hand. They glare at the infidel in no friendly manner, these holy maniacs or humbugs. They are apparently men who, in embracing the ascetic life, have renounced all luxuries except religious rancour.

I walk away quite satisfied with this glimpse of another world. Perhaps an admittance into the inner depths might have spoiled the sense of mystery and robbed me of the fascinating pastime of surmise concerning the unseen.

I continue my erratic perambulation, and finally pause before a kind of hostelry, bearing the inscription 'Panjrapole.' I enter into the courtyard, to find that it is in reality an asylum for superannuated beasts and birds. Here are cages containing sacred apes, munching the plantains which the faithful provide in such abundance for them; there are venerable goats, feasting on clover; further down stands a large coop, in which elderly hens and feebly-canting cocks are revelling in heaps of grain, which they share amicably with the interloping sparrows. But by far the greater part of the yard is devoted to the ancient horses and bulls, and cows and buffaloes, and other attenuated quadrupeds, whose skins display the unseemly marks of a cruel taskmaster. I am informed, however, that many of these seemingly obsolete bundles of bones, after a few months' strenuous eating, recover sufficiently to perpetuate their respective species. Evidence of the truth of this information is supplied by yon sheds full of lowing young calves and buffaloes. Some of the inmates of the asylum are even resold into slavery; for the pious Hindu who will not slay a brute for all the gold on earth has no scruple about selling it for a little silver, even when it is fully entitled to the rest of the sanatorium, or, better still, of the grave.

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I emerge from these precincts of a preposterous piety, and so back again into the din and the odours of more narrow lanes. The impression wrought upon me by all these scenes is that I am the victim of a bad dream. So I seek, and finally find, the realms of pure air and comparative sanity, the richer by a little wisdom purchased at the cost of a great disillusion. Was it worth it?

Let me try to extract at least some coherent moral out of my disillusion. The parts of an Oriental city which are brought under Occidental influence fast outgrow medieval conditions of life; the streets become straight, broad, and airy, and light penetrates into the alleys and courts which the overhanging upper stories once doomed to sempiternal gloom. But the quarters of the poor know none of these blessings. Year after year they grow more populous, and, as the space remains the same, more squalid. Squalor begets degradation, indecent and indescribable, and the fatal gift of fecundity, cultivated in many cases as a religious duty, fosters it.

To the curse of over-population is added the annual flood of the rains, which transforms the tortuous lanes into marshy lakes, fills the lower stories with malarious mud, and turns the whole quarter into an abode of prematurely aged men, of stunted, elderly children, and of repulsive wrecks of womanhood—a region where Poverty and Vice dance hand in hand, and where man is engaged in a perpetual struggle with Death. Nay, more often he does not even attempt to struggle, but succumbs with a prayer on his lips and in his heart despair, or the pathetic hope of a better world.

Year after year the plague comes, following what mathematicians call a harmonic curve, her path rising and sinking and rising again in normal accordance with the seasons. And day after day the victims are carted off to their dissolution in the earth, air, or the stomach of the vultures, after each sect's special hallucination.

A standing heading in every Indian newspaper is 'Plague

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Statistics.' Here is a recent specimen: 'Plague mortality in India is again going up. Last week 4,080 deaths were reported, 2,732 being in the Bombay Presidency, 580 in the Central Provinces and Berar, 145 in Hyderabad, 131 in Mysore, 30 in the Punjab, 60 in the United Provinces, and 187 in the Madras Presidency.'

With the cold weather the scourge waxes more virulent and the victims more numerous. Whole villages and towns are evacuated by the terrified survivors, the schools are closed, the bazaars are deserted, and the hand of Death lies heavy upon all. Then every man has an infallible remedy which he recommends to his friends, until his own turn comes, and his remedy fails with him.

Some native doctors recommend a fire in one's bedroom during any epidemic. There may in this advice be embodied the lessons of long experience. Unfortunately, in proof of its efficacy, one of them tells the following story:

'Once upon a time there came a hermit to a certain village in Kashmir. At the time cholera was playing havoc in the village, and hundreds were daily carried off by the disease. The hermit took pity on the people in their terrible distress, and advised a religious sacrifice. Logs of wood were collected and cast into the sacrificial pit, and a huge fire was kept blazing for three days and three nights. And behold! within three days of the sacrifice the epidemic abated and gradually departed.'

The narrator had nothing but scorn for 'men read in Western sciences,' who, foolish ones, ascribed the effect to the purifying influence of the fire on the soil and air of the village, and not to the three days' sacrifice.

Others believe in the poison of the cobra, the sacred serpent of Hindustan. One of these dangerous physicians declares that he has found it prescribed in the *Ayurveda* writings of three thousand years ago, and that he has tried it repeatedly, but apparently not on his own person. None of his patients ever died—so he says. Cobra poison, according to this amusing quack, does not only cure plague, but also promotes piety. 'The success

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which attended this humble discovery of mine was simply unbounded. People, panic-stricken and confounded before this, took heart and an optimistic view of God's providence.'

The British authorities are equally energetic, equally ingenious, and equally successful. Although the epidemic has now been in India for ten years, we are still quite in the dark as to its cause, its prevention, and its cure. The authorities, however, with a brave optimism as remarkable as their failure, are persevering in experiments which are by the more sanguine described, guardedly, as being 'on the right lines.' Among these essays in hygiene the most interesting, from a spectacular point of view, is the rat-hunt.

The theory is that the disease is communicated from one person to another by the bites of fleas which have deserted the rats that have died of plague. It is claimed that, when measures were adopted for the systematic destruction of rats, careful inquiries showed that new cases of plague occurred with almost mathematical precision in inverse ratio to the number of rats destroyed. It is further stated that, when a recrudescence occurred, the only district that suffered severely was one where the proprietor objected to the destruction of his household rats on religious grounds. The result of the discovery was a proclamation of a general and truceless crusade against this new enemy of mankind.

The operations began a twelvemonth ago. Stations for the reception of rats, dead or alive, were established in many parts of the country. At each of these stations were placed one keeper, one sweeper, and two cages—one for the corpses and the other for the captives. Rat-traps were supplied at municipal expense to the poor, and a price was offered of one pice (farthing) per head, dead or alive. At three o'clock in the afternoon all the cages were collected to a central station, where a tank was dug, and its water mixed with a solution of carbolic acid. There, in the presence of the special plague doctor, the prisoners

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were thoroughly drowned, then taken out, and all the corpses were counted carefully and cremated solemnly.

The people, conscientious scruples notwithstanding, have taken kindly to the game. On a single day, which happened to be a holy festival, the pious Mahomedans of a village, being forbidden to work, collected as many as 411 rats, and earned as many farthings. Lest the mere proclamation of the tempting blood-money should fail to reach every heart, the people are usually called to arms once a week by the beat of the tom-tom—an official instrument of distress as popular in modern India as the town-crier's bell and the night-watchman's rattle were in old England.

Yet, after a whole year's ruthless anthropomyomachia, we are no safer than in time of peace, and all sensible people and Lieutenant-Governors have to fall back upon the trite recommendations of cleanliness, disinfection, segregation, fresh air, regular habits, and like wise platitudes. At the same time the persecution of the wretched rats is going furiously on, and, in any case, it can injure no one, except the rats; for there has not yet come into being any society for the prevention of cruelty to vermin, although it is true the Indian Humanitarian Committee has issued a manifesto denouncing the Pasteur Institute at Kasauli for the 'inhuman barbarities perpetrated on the lower animals,' with no other purpose than that of alleviating human misery.

Nor are European humanitarians the only opponents of scientific research. The native press from time to time, when tired of attacking Lord Curzon, has been seeking relaxation in attacks on inoculation. These attacks, as I read them, arise partly from genuine cussedness and partly from a scepticism which, seeing the results which science has so splendidly succeeded in not attaining, is neither incomprehensible nor unpardonable. Less intelligible to me is the faith of Lord Lamington, the Governor of this presidency, who the other day, in the course of a speech at the Bombay Government Plague Research

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Laboratory, extolled the part which the Government is playing in the campaign against the disease, and appealed to all who had influence over the people to do their utmost to convert them to the worship of science. Lord Lamington has no philosophic doubts. The foundations of his belief are official statistics. But the Indians prefer the evidence of their own unenlightened eyes. And this evidence shows that, after ten years' scientific research, the disease is thriving.

But perhaps the deepest and most general source of distrust of scientific methods is what may be crudely described as superstition. The fact is that the people of this country, even the educated among them, still live in the theological age. The immortals still walk in the plains of Hindustan, fighting against each other and finding favour in the eyes of the daughters of man. Sky and heaven still are synonymous terms here, and the air is peopled with spirits. The miraculous is an everyday occurrence, and the only thing that is incredible is the natural. Whatever of good or evil befalls man does so through the direct agency of the gods. The mythological interpretation of things is the only interpretation intelligible to the Indian mind, and the only method for averting calamity is prayer, magic, and multifarious incantations and propitiations of the powers of evil.

How can we expect these people to look upon our laboratories as other than things presumptuous and ridiculous? Let us be thankful that they do not regard our scientific experiments as a wanton provocation of the evil ones.

After all, it is not so very long since we quitted the mythological cradle ourselves—or have we altogether quitted it yet? Do we not still pray to be delivered from disease? The Indian's fault is that, like our own medieval ancestors, he is consistent in his animistic theory of the universe, while we are no longer. Therein lies the sole difference. It is, I think, a question of time. Let us be patient with those who are to-day what we were yesterday.

But, at the worst, plague is only a modern upstart, and

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has not yet been definitely deified by the priests of Hindustan. If she is feared as a goddess, the fear is reasonable and the godship vague. This is not, however, the case with her great rival. Small-pox is an ancient deity of assured position, worshipped in dread earnest and with terrible results. Not long ago thirty patients were found in the very temple from which I was so ignominiously expelled. They had been taken there for a cure by means of the customary rites of propitiation. The temples, therefore, despite the Health Department, are no mere places of devotion, but also active and popular centres for the dissemination of disease.

To make success doubly sure, the stricken congregation drives to the temple in the public conveyances, each of which is thus automatically converted into a vehicle of death. These public conveyances, like everything else in Bombay, are of two kinds and of two continents: smart, smoothly-rolling victorias with indiarubber tyres and the merry bullock-carts already described. Both are numbered as hackney carriages, and the facilities for infection offered by the one are equal to those offered by the other. These are some of the perils which the adventurous explorer of the bazaars of Bombay has a good chance of encountering. A drive through those gay bazaars may be confidently recommended to all those who suffer from *l'ennui de la vie*. It can cure them either of life or, at least, of the *ennui*. For though in Bombay you may be driven to death or to madness, you cannot be bored.

You cannot be bored even at the best of times, least of all at a moment when the city is wildly fermenting with the anticipation of a visit from the heir to all the thrones of Hindustan. The Government, the municipality, and the ultra-loyal Parsi aristocracy, have all conspired to render Bombay temporarily uninhabitable. Triumphal arches, florid with ungrammatical inscriptions and mixed metaphors, in which the sacred fire in the heart of the British Empire is bidden to burn and flourish for ever, stands, platforms, water-carts, and rollers propelled by

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steam or pulled by a chorus of rhythmically groaning coolies, have for weeks been the disorder of the day, and the city of Bombay has for weeks been a city encased in aerial bamboo scaffoldings of many knots, with thousands of coffee-coloured, lithe coolies climbing up and down, trowel or paint-pot in hand, brush between the toes, and little girls and boys carrying the needful on their heads and filling the air with their monotonous chanting. The gaping drains and the heaps of rubbish, the turmoil and the dust and the din, have turned the Eye of India into a great eyesore. And to think that identical transformations and torments are simultaneously going on in every one of the dozens of cities which the Prince and Princess of Wales will honour with a casual glance! Why do people try to be clean only when they hope to be seen?

But this is not the time or the place for philosophical conundrums. Let me only mention, as part of the universal upheaval, that zoologists have been furnishing their museums with fresh specimens of beetles and lizards and bugs for the Prince's edification, while gifted journalists, I understand, have been laboriously laying up a fresh stock of old adjectives, called, I think, descriptive.

I turn for relief to the local newspapers, and my eye is met with paragraphs which aggravate my distress. In one I read: 'Every citizen, no matter where his house is, is requested to do something in the way of decorating his house or business premises in honour of the royal visit, in order that the whole city may have a gay and festive appearance.' O East, Far or Near, even thy gaiety is made by order! I throw the paper down and pick up another, in which I read: 'His Highness Sir Sultan Shah Aga Khan, G.C.I.E., has issued orders to his estate manager, Mr. Jaffer Cassum Moosa, to decorate and illuminate. . . .' I can read no more. A Mahomedan Prince and a Jewish estate manager—this, at all events, is instructive, if not amusing. Yes, Bombay is grimly determined to do her duty and be gay.

The population has received an appreciable addition in

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the persons of the native chiefs of Western India come to greet the Prince. They may be seen at every turn, turbaned in multitudinous rainbows, some driving in state-coaches and four, followed by half a dozen prancing lancers; others, similarly arrayed and escorted, are driving their own dog-carts. A few of these exalted and superlatively bejewelled personages, obviously in platonic love with the novelty of simplicity, are rattling unostentatiously in their motor-cars. There are amongst them rajas and maharajas, nawabs, raos and ranas, thakor sahibs and sar desais, raj sahibs, pant sachivs, naik nimbalkas and sardars without number, each with a retinue proportionate to his degree. One of them evoked my profoundest admiration, not so much by the pink amplitude of his turban and the number of his followers as by the sight of the servant on the box, who sat bolt upright, carrying on his finger the prince's favourite falcon.

Many of these sons of the East, despite their most un-European turbans, majesty of mien, and general bulk, speak English fluently, and the other evening I had the curious pleasure of seeing one of the heaviest of these Highnesses vivaciously beating time to 'The Soldiers in the Park' and other masterpieces from the English stage which the band perpetrated on the veranda of my hotel. It was after dinner. The banquet had been hilarious. I retired to bed dimly wondering what demon it is that prompts us to strive so ardently to turn Asia into a colossal caricature of Europe.

This, then, is the state of things in Bombay and the other great cities of India. But what of the country at large?

It is related by the English press in India, and faithfully echoed by the English press in England, that when the present King made his tour through this peninsula the whole country was roused to a display of emotion until then considered utterly incompatible with Oriental placidity and sense of decorum. We read that the

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Oriental reveres his Sovereign as a god, and that there are no limits to his power of self-mystification. I do not know how it was in those days, for in those days I was in the nursery. At this moment, and in India, I am unable to confirm these descriptions of native sentiment without serious qualification.

During the Hindu Durga festivals a few weeks ago I saw, among the grotesque statuettes of gods and goddesses exposed by the thousand for sale on the counters in the bazaars, many obese little busts which were unmistakable, though unconscious, parodies of the late *Malikah-ee-Muazzameh*—the Gracious Queen—already enthroned in the hospitable halls of the labyrinthic Hindu pantheon as a minor deity, or rather as the latest incarnation of some mighty and multiform goddess of old standing. These busts were improved copies of the artistic atrocities so common in England during the two Jubilees, the veil being replaced by a blatant Union Jack. I have also seen a corpulent Parsi lady in her brougham with her veil attached to her head in feeble imitation of Queen Victoria's portraits, and across her capacious bosom the border of her cloak doing duty for the ribbon of the Star of India. But in both cases these tributes of admiration met my eyes in the immediate neighbourhood of Government House. In the regions beyond the direct influence of the British rule such things are more impossible than miracles.

The same observations apply to the royal visit. The millions of this country, platitudes to the contrary notwithstanding, are simply unaware of the existence of the British Emperor or of his son. To them all earthly government is personified in the visible magistrate or native chief immediately over them. This is their god—a very poor dog of a god, but at all events tangible. But the mute millions, of course, do not count. As to the important and articulate few, whatever they were thirty years ago, at the present hour they are inclined rather to criticise their old gods than to create new ones.

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For all that, I felt no desire to quarrel with my platitudinarian friend when, in tones of extraordinary, almost tearful, solemnity, he said: 'Their Royal Highnesses' presence will provide a fitting climax to the emotions that were aroused by the Delhi Durbar.'

'I know nothing about emotions,' I answered sweetly, 'but I fully agree with you as to the climax.'

We stood on the landing-pier, known by the characteristically hybrid name Apollo Bunder, watching the *Renown* as she steamed slowly into harbour. At that moment, as though in confirmation of my friend's words, the warships in the harbour began booming forth a royal salute.

A few hours later we once more stood on the pier watching the landing of the Prince and Princess of Wales. All my magnificent maharajas were here under the pavilion prepared for the reception, and they were even more magnificent than anything I had ever seen before. Words fail to adequately describe them, as we journalists say. Each one of them was a breathing, gleaming, perspiring monument of silk and gold and stones which, I suppose for their rarity, men call precious. I recognised among the number my immense friend who beat time to the 'Soldiers in the Park' the other evening. But, O ye shades of Darius and Xerxes, how transformed! His head was encircled in a tower of silk and pearls, round his herculean neck hung three rows of big green stones, the torso was encased in brocade of gold, and an apron of glittering stuff covered the rest of the body in many rigid creases.

Another maharaja stood close to me. He was a small man, attired in a great turban, from the crown of which rose a plume of red and blue and gold, quivering and twinkling in the sun and giving him the appearance of a brilliant bird of paradise. In front of this head-dress gleamed an enamelled miniature of Queen Victoria set in pearls. A tight sea-green tunic embraced his body and

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a gold-broidered sash hung its golden fringe from the waist. From beneath this stretched two thin patent-leather top-boots armed with spurs of gold.

The reader must imagine a dozen similar princes, attired each after his traditional fashion and personal taste in splendour, and each recklessly eager to outshine all the others.

It must be to the appearance of her princes that the East owes her fame for wealth. They are as magnificent as their subjects are miserable. But what of that? Are not the many created for the few—whether frankly, as in the East, or essentially, as in the West?

When the Prince had finished shaking by the hand each wigged and gowned judge, frock-coated official and be-jewelled maharaja, he stood with the Princess and Lord and Lady Curzon and Lord Lamington on a daïs facing the crowd. 'Oh, isn't she a howling beauty?' whispered an American lady, pointing with her fan to Lady Curzon. I was gazing at the Prince and Princess, admiring their wonderful faculty for looking interested, as the President of the Corporation of Bombay—of course, a black-mitred Parsi—addressed to them with rhetorical emphasis many words of welcome. Then the Prince retaliated at similar length, and I, being nobody, enjoyed such relief as is in a score of little yawns, covert yet cordial.

For a whole week there was nothing but the clattering of hoofs, the rattling of wheels, the thunder of salutes, the glitter of state-coaches, the sheen of maharajas, and the infliction of platitudinous oratory. In the days there were drives through the bazaars, under strings of flags and streamers and Chinese lanterns and greetings stretched densely across; visits and counter-visits; laying of foundation-stones and opening of new thoroughfares. In the evenings there were banquets and levées. At all these functions I had the privilege to be bored. But their poor Royal Highnesses endured it all with truly princely patience, and the visit to Bombay was, as my American lady friend would have said, 'a howling success.'

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PRESENTATION OF MUNICIPAL ADDRESS, BOMBAY.

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The one ceremony that did not bore me was one at which I was not present. But partly from the description given me by the Government, and partly from that supplied by a lady friend, I have gathered the knowledge which I proceed to bestow on the reader. It was a strictly purdah affair—that is, a function by ladies and for ladies. It took place in the Town Hall.

(After the usual presentations, the Princess mounted the steps to the first landing. There a group of Parsi ladies performed the ceremony known as 'Vadhavilevani.' An egg and a cocoanut were passed seven times round the head of Her Royal Highness and then broken, the seven times symbolizing the seven circles of the world, and the breaking being an emblematic prayer that so may be broken any calamities that the evil spirits which move in those circles may be concocting for the person performed upon. Furthermore, the Parsi ladies explained that, as the breaking of the egg and the cocoanut is productive of wholesome nourishment, so may every broken evil turn to good for the Princess. Likewise a dish full of water was passed seven times round the head and then poured away, the significance of this being that no drought but rainy abundance may be the Princess's lot through life. A small handful of rice was also thrown over the head, indicating the wish that Her Royal Highness may not only have enough food, but in such plenty as to be able even to scatter it round her. Lastly, the lady, learned in mystic lore, who acted as the high-priestess in these rites, pressed her knuckles fast against her own temples, making them crack in token that even so may all misfortunes and evil influences be cracked off the Princess.)

On the top of the stairs a group of Hindu ladies were waiting for their own turn. Their ceremony, called 'Arti,' consisted in a number of burning wicks, ranged in a tray round a quantity of red powder, wherewith it was their kind intention to anoint the Princess's brow. But Her Royal Highness evaded the intention with the same smiling tact which had already enabled her to escape

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many a weighty garland of flowers without offence. This ceremony indicates that, as red is the brightest of the seven colours, even so may the brightest of lights shine upon the recipient for ever.

At the entrance to the hall the Mahomedan ladies acted, after their own fashion, the harmless rite called 'Ameen.' There was neither fire nor water here. The Princess, who had most successfully passed through those two trials of good temper, was simply garlanded and beshowered with gold and silver almonds and other nuts, reminiscent of the *nuces* which the Romans used to scatter over the bride and the Greeks over newly-bought slaves. But these ladies knew none of these things, luckily, and the explanation they gave was that the nuts were simply symbols of peace, because they yield oil. Even so, then, may the oil of peace smooth the course of the Princess's life. I fear they were the victims of their own metaphors; but this is irrelevant. They then handed the Princess a cocoanut, minutely emblematic of the following wishes: As its kernel gives food and contains water, as its leaves provide roofing, as its coir makes some articles of furniture, and as its shells make cups, so may the Princess never lack food, water, shelter, and furniture.

'We shall be very much surprised if, after all these rites, Her Royal Highness ever goes to the workhouse,' said my lady informant, with a smile.

I could only share her sentiment and return her smile.

'It is a thousand pities that those responsible for the arrangements of the tour have not seen their way to organize a lion-hunt.'

'A lion-hunt in Bombay!'

'Not in the town, of course,' said my literal friend, 'but somewhere in the interior of the Presidency.'

I thought the suggestion romantic, but upon inquiry I found that it was not so wild as I had thought.

To the north of Bombay lies the peninsula of Kathiawar, a political agency subordinate to the Government of

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Bombay, having under its control, direct or indirect, no fewer than 187 distinct States, great and small, a few of which are quite independent, and of the others some tributary to the British Government, some to the Gaekwar of Baroda, and some to the Nawab of Junagarh. Furthermore, the peninsula contains the great Gir forest, and it is there that my friend's lions live. No census of them has ever been taken, but they appear to be a great sylvan colony, subsisting chiefly on Indian peasants.

On the borders of the forest stretches the land of Amreli, which belongs to the Gaekwar of Baroda, and it is said that the authorities of this privileged district wrote not long ago to the representatives of their neighbour, the Nawab of Junagarh, requesting them officially: 'Please stop your lions from carrying off our coolies.'

The *Times of India* in a recent issue gave many interesting particulars concerning the customs and manners of these lions. I extract the following morsel:

'But perhaps the most recent and notable instance of the daring of the lions occurred only last Wednesday night, shortly after the Governor had arrived at the camp at Sasan. A man was riding three miles from the camp after dark, when he was attacked by a lion. He incontinently fell off his pony, dropped his gun and sword, and bolted. The lion seized the pony and carried it off. To anyone acquainted with the ways of jungle folk, their demeanour in the jungle after dark is significant enough. They will not move without lights, and they beg those who happen to be with them to keep close to the flares, as otherwise they may be attacked. The villagers manifestly live in a dread of the lions which is certainly genuine enough, though it was not fully credited until now, as hardly any Europeans had visited the interior of the Gir for some time. There are, it need scarcely be added, innumerable cases of depredations among livestock.'

I think I begin to understand India: elegant suburban villas and lions; Veneto-Gothic Secretariat offices and

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virgin forests; a few tiny drops of modern civilization floating on an ocean of what I may, for politeness' sake, call primitive culture. My platitudinarian friend calls it picturesque culture. And again I am not inclined to quarrel with him, for a few days ago a telegram from Bhavnagar, in the immediate neighbourhood of the Gir forest, announced that an attendant in the service of the Prince of Jasdan had been arrested on a charge of having mixed poison in the food served at the Prince's table. It appears that while the Prince and four guests were dining they were suddenly taken ill. The food was immediately sent to the doctor for analysis, and he declared that it contained arsenic.

Virgin forest—lions—native prince—banquet—poison. Could the most romantic of young lady romancers invent a plot more replete with the things called picturesque? Verily, the commonplaces of Indian life are stranger than the wildest dreams of European fever. When I grow weary of sober reality I will pitch my tent in India.



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CHAPTER II

INDORE

We left Bombay in the evening of November 14. Our visit to this little native State was due to the special favour of Famine—that long-armed, grim-visaged goddess who is responsible for so many things in this part of the world. But for her intervention, we should have gone to Ajmer instead. But poor Ajmer is in no holiday mood just now. It has just been officially declared a famishing district. Telegrams from other parts of the country also published during the last few days announce a rapid rise in the prices of food-grains throughout Upper India, especially in the Punjab and Rajputana. The numbers of persons in receipt of relief doles are growing daily. From the Punjab also to-day comes the news that Plague is carrying off her thousands, and the authorities are energetically poisoning rats.

But do not let us dwell on things mournful. We are supposed to be enjoying ourselves. And, in truth, once your heart was hermetically closed to the other side of things, 'twas sweet, as the poet says, to spurn the thirsty plains that lie and wait upon the skies, to leave the matutinal drains of dry municipalities, the clamour of the streets, the flies, the leaden hotel hours that scarce can crawl, and to climb up through the breezy night to the heights of Indore.

The first part of the journey took us across a thick jungle with patches of arable land cleared here and there, ill-tilled and only less unkempt than the jungle itself. At rare intervals blue smoke, curling up from amid the trees,

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proclaimed the presence of human beings. Gradually these signs of life became more frequent. A corn-rick here, a rickety watchman's loft there, a shed lower down, or a mud hovel, its thatch covered with dung-cakes, came to give a meaning to the landscape. But as we proceeded the green forest made more and more room for the golden cornfield, while in the parched pastures broused herds of cattle, and the wilderness of brown stubble and yellow corn-stalk or black, newly-ploughed earth was now and again interrupted by rivers which, though mere pariah streams at this time of year, when swollen by the rains turn the adjacent fields into lakes, and, departing, leave behind them large malarious marshes. Down upon all this glared the noontide sun out of a sky white with the heat of an India November day, abruptly succeeding to the chills of the night.

We reached Indore at four o'clock, and the first sight that met my eye was a steam-mill on one side of the station, and on the other a great bull carrying a couple of water-skins athwart his hump. The station itself was gay with red carpets, many-coloured bunting, two score and fifteen chiefs of Central India, and a number of British officers, awaiting the Prince. Among the former sat conspicuous His Highness the Maharaja Holkar of Indore—a delicate youth of some nineteen years of age, in gorgeous robes of scarlet and gold—and Her Highness the Begum of Bhopal—a little bundle of lilac silk crowned with diamonds. In front two holes, veiled with gauze, intimated the position of Her Highness's eyes. Each of the other chiefs was apparelled in special grandeur, and one of them wore on his head a golden diadem obviously modelled after that of the Tsar.

The Prince and Princess, when they alighted, shook hands with the Maharaja and the principal chiefs, Her Royal Highness singling the invisible little Begum out for a conversation carried on under extraordinary difficulties.

In the evening every one of the few great public buildings, the many small houses, and most of the open shops

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NATIVE CHIEFS AWAITING ROYAL TRAIN AT INDORE.

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in the bazaar, were illuminated after a fashion at once beautiful and fantastic. But the most beautiful and fantastic sight of all was the river Kahn, with its winding banks outlined in tremulous oil lamps and rows of Chinese lanterns hung on the trees and bamboos. It zigzagged from the darkness and into the darkness—a serpent of duplicate streaks of many-tinted light, quivering against a duplicate background of sombre foliage. Beneath the ample awnings near the river sat the chiefs of Bundelkhand on quaint thrones of gold and silver, with one leg tucked up, after the manner of ganders at rest, their arms languid on lions or tigers of carved and gilt wood. There they sat in their gorgeous state robes, while around them stood their attendants, some bearing enormous fly-flaps of horse-hair or of peacock feathers, others holding aloft the banners of their masters. They were 'At Home' to a crowd of guests, mostly European officers, residents, visitors, and ladies, who swarmed over the lawns, while from the distance came the strains of Caledonian bagpipes and Indian drums, floating on the night air. Upon all shone the calm silver moon out of a sky serene and limpid as the waters of the Kahn. It was a scene of dreamy charm which I shall not soon forget.

But the native bazaars drew me away from the dreamy river banks. There was a piece of the pure East awaiting me. Amid the twinkling lights and shades of the balconies above glided the silhouettes of veiled women, while the streets below rumbled with state-coaches of an indescribable variety of epoch, colour, style, and splendour, creaked with innumerable springless vehicles drawn by miserable little ponies or bullocks, and hummed with the drowsy murmur of thousands of Oriental sightseers. And out of this chorus arose the loud chanting of the fakir, as, staff in one hand and rosary in the other, he wandered round, invoking the blessing of Allah upon the charitable men of Indore and all true believers.

Yet, now that the noises have been hushed and the moon shines silently upon the last flickering lanterns, it

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is good to be in this camp—upon the tranquil banks of the Kahn, breathing the clear night air of some 1,800 feet above sea-level and speculating hazily upon the future of things.

While enjoying this brief spell of quiet, it may be interesting to recapitulate the little knowledge you have gleaned about the people who live in this large, struggling capital of this little Mahratta State in Malwa. For, I take it, the life of the country is not entirely made up of Chinese lanterns and state-coaches. To-morrow we shall have a grand Durbar and garden-parties and banquets and receptions, at which His Royal Highness will deliver the insignia of a G.C.I.E. to Her Highness the Begum of Bhopal, and of a K.C.I.E. to the Raja of Sailona, one of the principal Central Indian chiefs. These and many other functions, solemn or festive, will occur to-morrow and the day after. But to-night let us be prosaic and, if possible, instructive.

The whole State of Indore includes a population fully equal to two or three London suburbs—a million of brown-skinned, greatly-turbaned creatures, Mahrattas, Hindus, Mahomedans, and aborigines, fameless, faithless, and nameless, scattered over some 9,000 square miles. Over them rules a nominal autocrat, who dwells in this town, together with one-tenth of his subjects, governing them with powers of life and death, exercised discreetly, according to the advice of the inevitable British Political Agent. It is an arrangement satisfactory to both sides. The British Raj undertakes to defend the Maharaja against the aggressive ambition of his more powerful neighbours, and to mediate in case of quarrels with them; likewise, if he is a minor, to educate him in the way he should go. The Maharaja, on his part, pledges himself to abstain from direct communication, or even subtle diplomatic intrigue, with the other States; to limit his military force within the bounds dictated by mere love of peace; not to avail himself of the wisdom of European or American adventurers without permission;

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and to help in the purchase and transport of supplies for the troops kept by the British Government for his protection. So long as he behaves properly, His Highness may call himself an independent sovereign, a Knight Grand Commander of the Star of India, and a Companion of the Order of the Indian Empire; he is allowed to enjoy a permanent thunder of nineteen guns when he visits the British possessions, and a salute of twenty-one guns in his own dominions—or even, if he is very good, the same number in British territory—and, in one word, to be as happy as human maharaja can be. For is not £120,000 out of the £700,000 of the annual revenue of the State devoted to the maintenance of his own palace?

This colossal edifice, with its towering gateway of many stories scowling upon the city, and that other summer palace which smiles placidly amid the beautiful trees of the Lal Bagh, are things eminently worth having. The latter estate also contains a market-place, a reading-room, a cotton-mill, a dispensary, a school and a menagerie of wild beasts which mingle their sweet voices agreeably with the rumble of English wheels and the recitations of English classics, and a moribund mint. What more is there in the power of Heaven to bestow, or in that of man to receive?

The mint, however, reminds me of unpleasant things. The Spokesman of Native Discontent, to whom I always listen with interest tempered by critical caution, a little time ago spoke as follows:

'There is nothing which the native Princes prize so much as the right of coinage; and well they may, for it is the emblem of sovereignty. From several Native States the right of coinage has been withdrawn, and they have been persuaded or pressed by negotiations which, carried on by the Resident or the Governor-General's Agent, are veiled commands to give up their own coinage and the right of coining money, and accept the British coinage. Alwar, Jhalwar, Bikaneer, Bhopal, and last, but not least, Indore, are among the States which have been persuaded

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to forego this sovereign power and accept British coinage. The story of the conversion of Indore *Hali* coins into British coins is an interesting one, and is fairly illustrative of the growth of Imperialistic ideas which threaten slowly but steadily to encroach upon the treaty rights of Native Princes. The change in Indore was carried out in 1902, when the Maharaja had been deprived of his powers, and the government was conducted by a Council, nominally under the control of the Maharaja, but really dominated by the all-powerful personality of the British Resident representing the Paramount Power. Such a Council could not dare go against the mandate of the Resident or the wishes of the Governor-General's Agent. The conversion, which involved the withdrawal of this emblem of sovereign power, was thus the act of the Paramount Power rather than that of the State; and was it right or seemly on the part of the British Government to have deprived the State of this right at a time when it was acting as the trustee of the State, charged with the maintenance of its dignity and its interests?'

Alas, my indignant friend, what is the use of propounding your abstruse conundrums to me?

I inquired of the moderate and learned Advocate of India what he thought about it, and he answered as follows:

'The Indian States, including those in Burma, number 688, and have a population aggregating upwards of 70,000,000, very nearly one-third of that of British India. One hundred and seventy of the larger and more important of these States are under the immediate control of the Viceroy, who, through the Foreign Department, directs all matters concerning administrative questions and successions, and formulates the policy which guides the relations between them and the paramount Power. Of course, authorities differ as to the precise degree of subordination or dependency of the more powerful States, some of which contracted treaties of alliance and friendship with the old East India Company prior to the

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transfer of India to the Crown, and Viceroys regulate the degree and extent of their interference with the personal and administrative affairs of the Princes according to their own judgment. The policy of the Indian Government towards its feudatories is largely based upon precedents, which, having been once accepted without demur, become inflexible laws to which no resistance can be conveniently or usefully offered. The complexities thus created are incomprehensible except to those initiated in the traditions of the Foreign Department and the Residents and Political Agents who have to expound and apply them at the native Courts to which they are accredited. And, as may be readily imagined, their interpretations of a somewhat nebulous procedure are not always happily conceived, as they are liable to be tinged by the personal idiosyncrasies of the exponents. When such instances occur—and, despite all the precautions of the Foreign Department, they do occasionally occur—friction and unfriendliness usurp the ideal relations contemplated and desired by the paramount Power between its representatives and the Princes.'

Thus spoke the learned Advocate.

Not content with these views, I approached a third oracle. It responded:

'The policy of the British Government in this respect is not quite the same as it was in the beginning of British rule more than a century ago. From 1757, when Clive, after the victory of Plassey, laid the foundations of the British Empire in India, up to the close of Lord Minto's administration in 1813, the pressure of Parliament and the prudence of the East India Company operated in the direction of a policy of non-intervention. During this period the Native States led an almost independent life. But the confusion, disorder, and general unsatisfactory condition of affairs in them proved greatly detrimental, not only to the internal administration of British India, but also to other Imperial interests of a serious nature. For instance, in the British districts touching the borders

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of native administration, the police felt the difficulty of arresting criminals and preventing their escape into foreign jurisdictions; the revenue officers experienced similar difficulties in excluding untaxed opium or illicit spirits from British territory; and sanitary measures could not successfully be effected in time of epidemics. Common defence and other requirements of the daily growing Empire urged upon the Government the necessity of introducing railways and roads, telegraphs and post-offices, into the dominions of some of the Chiefs. In the interests of the Empire, therefore, the Native States had to be brought to a state of "subordinate isolation." Their international status was destroyed, and the Guardian Power assumed exclusive control over their foreign relations. The Chiefs were made to unite for the common cause, and an understanding on certain points necessary for the welfare of the Empire was arrived at. They were, however, left to arrange their internal affairs after their own way, in pursuance of a desire to preserve native rule. But the doctrine of non-intervention, it is a pity, was pushed to absurd limits, and the interests of the suffering millions were entirely ignored, until such scrupulous avoidance of interference sadly resulted, in some instances, in the adoption of annexation as a necessary corrective. For when a native sovereign could by no means be persuaded to look upon a proposed reform as anything but an insult to his dignity, there could be no remedy other than the entire suppression of his sovereignty.'

Thus far the pleaders of India and of the Indian Government. Now hearken again unto the ultra-discontented Native Spokesman:

'The Queen's Proclamation is the Magna Charta of our rights. It is even a greater Charter for the Princes of India. "We shall respect the rights, dignity, and honour of Native Princes as our own," are the solemn words of the Proclamation. We fear this gracious promise has not been redeemed. The Imperialistic views of Lord Curzon have dealt a serious blow at the dignity of the Native Princes.

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In 1858, when the Proclamation was announced, they were the allies of the Sovereign, the honoured Feudatories of the Empire. To-day they are the vassals of the Viceroy.'

The most moderate Advocate concludes his exposition with commendable inconclusiveness, as follows:

'Lord Dalhousie's sweeping annexations, which Sir Mortimer Durand, no mean authority, considered as largely responsible for the Mutiny, had been followed by reassurances given to the Princes by Lord Canning and a period of comparative quiescence under his immediate successors. To Lord Northbrook must be ascribed the resuscitation of the policy of intervention in the affairs of Native States, which, twenty years previously, had frequently resulted in annexation on the ground of misgovernment. The doctrine of protection, which he inaugurated, has been expanded and amplified by his successors to a degree which makes it absolutely impossible for any publicist to give an intelligible description of the complex relations which now form the basis of the policy maintained by the Government of India towards its Feudatories. The latter are so circumscribed and bound in fetters of red-tape, assiduously spun by successive Viceroys and Political Agents, that the term "Independent," except in a modified degree within the boundaries of their State, has no longer any application to their Governments. Whether the reiterated assurances, official and other, of the profound belief in their loyalty and devotion to Imperial interests is accepted by the Princes as a sufficient solatium for the loss of their independence is a problem we are unable to solve.'

With my characteristic modesty I refrain from comment, beyond the Aristophanic warning, *πρὶν ἂν ἀμφοῖν μῦθον ἀκούσῃς, οὐκ ἂν δικάσαις*, which, though couched in Greek, is perfectly harmless, and for all practical purposes useless.

That there are two versions of the story the above utterances amply prove. Yet Lord Curzon's oratory, if un-

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checked by independent and patient investigation, leaves upon the mind echoes of a harmony such as the wise Odysseus found so charming to hear and so fatal to follow. Says the late Viceroy, in one of his latest public displays in this country:

'The position which is occupied by the British Crown towards the feudatory Princes of India is one of the greatest responsibilities that is anywhere enjoyed by a sovereign authority. Sometimes it may impose upon that authority unwelcome or distasteful obligations; but far more often it is the source of a relationship which is honourable and advantageous to both, and which associates them in the bonds of a political union without any parallel for its intimacy or confidence in the world. As one who has represented the sovereign Power for an unusual length of time in India, I can speak with some right to be heard when I say that anything that enhances the security or adds to the dignity of the Indian Princes is above all things welcome to the British Government.'

It may be so; in fact, I am disposed to think that, on the whole, it is so. The fact remains that the majority of articulate Indians do not believe that it is so. Perhaps their distrust is due to our own inimitable faculty of throwing our good intentions on the heads of people in a manner which leads the unfortunate recipients of our favours to mistake them for brick-bats.

Briefly, every one of the 688 native princes rules, or reigns, *quam diu se bene gesserit*—the *bene* being one of those beautifully elastic terms that can be stretched or contracted at pleasure. Quite recently one of the least of these Princes reached the breaking-point of his *bene*, and the result was painful. How painful it was is shown from the following proclamation issued by the Madras Government, and printed in the newspapers under the ominous title:

'SUSPENSION OF A RULING CHIEF.

'Whereas the Nawab Syed Fateh Ali Khan Bahadur, C.S.I., Jagirdar of Banganapalle, has, by persistent extra-

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vagance, involved himself deeply in debt and impoverished the administration of the Jagir, and has persistently disregarded the advice, remonstrances, and warnings of the Governor of Fort St. George in Council, and has persistently obstructed the proposals for reform in the administration urged on him by the Governor of Fort St. George in Council, the Governor of Fort St. George in Council, considering that the misgovernment of the Nawab Syed Fateh Ali Khan should be stayed, and further injury to the Jagir prevented, accordingly, with the concurrence and sanction of the Government of India, and under the terms of the "Sanad" of 1849, and in virtue of the responsibility of the British Government towards the people of the Jagir, hereby declares that the said Nawab Fateh Ali Khan Bahadur is removed temporarily from the direct administration of Banganapalle Jagir, which is assumed by the Governor of Fort St. George in Council. This decision will have effect from the 1st February, 1905. During the period for which powers of direct administration are withdrawn, the said Nawab Fateh Ali Khan Bahadur will be granted from the revenues of the Jagir such allowance for his personal maintenance and expenditure as the Government in Council may from time to time determine.'

Be the substance what it may, however, in point of semblance, at all events, Indore is a sovereign State, and its young ruler, *quam diu se bene gerat*, has no reason to envy any of the Central India chiefs who have assembled here to greet the Prince and Princess of Wales. All these gaily-plumed and pearl-adorned potentates cannot but feel that their host, thus honoured by the heir to the Imperial throne, despite his tender years, is a greater man than themselves. For does he not even take precedence of the mature Maharaja of Alwar in all Imperial functions?

Of all these functions, the most memorable and impressive was, undoubtedly, the Durbar. A large pavilion of glittering cloth was prepared on the yellow plain which surrounds the Residency, within a few minutes' walk of

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our camp. At one end of the pavilion was a silver-cloth carpeted and canopied daïs, upon which stood two thrones —a velvet and silver one in front, and a smaller armchair of velvet and gold a little back. Half a dozen attendants, in robes of scarlet and gold and turbans of white and gold, stood behind: one armed with a scarlet and gold parasol, another with an immense scarlet and gold fan, two with colossal fly-flaps of horse-hair, and two with some curious instruments of imaginary coolness which looked like Hercules' club. On either side of the daïs sat the ladies-in-waiting and the officers of the household, including the interpreter, while the path leading from the daïs to the entrance was flanked by the fifty odd chiefs of Central India, first among them the little Begum of Bhopal, muffled in silks as on the previous day. Behind these serried ranks of plumes and pearls and precious stones and brocade of gold were ranged the ordinary guests.

A little before eleven the Princess slipped on to the daïs informally from behind, and took her seat thereon. Ten minutes later the thunder of many hoofs, followed by a salute and the National Anthem, announced the approach of the Prince. He entered, and as, preceded by two long lines of aides-de-camp, he advanced to the daïs, the whole assembly rose to their feet. On His Royal Highness's taking his seat, the Durbar commenced.

First was presented the Begum, who, having bowed twice, returned to her seat. She was followed in order of precedence by eighteen maharajas, rajas, and nawabs, each accompanied by the Political Officer attached to his Court, a brilliant, if barbaric, procession: some turbaned, others crowned, young and old, bearded and beardless, lean and stout, green, blue, red, white, purple, they all came, one after another, bowed, the Prince returned the bow and laid his hand between theirs, and they retreated backwards. Then the Prince read an address to the interpreter, who translated it into Hindustani to the assembly. Thereupon the same chiefs, in the same order, approached the throne; two attendants came forward with two silver salvers, and

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the Prince handed to each chief a piece of *pan* wrapped up in silver paper, and sprinkled a few drops of ottar of roses into his handkerchief. An officer offered the same fragrant attentions to each of the inferior rajas, and this brought the ceremony to an end. The Prince led the way out, and the company emerged from the comparative coolness of the pavilion into the glaring sun of the yellow plain.

'A most important function,' said my platitudinarian friend.

'Yes,' I answered, 'and a very gorgeous spectacle.'

Platitudinarianism is infectious.

The person next in dignity to the Prince of Indore and superior to him in power is the British Agent, whose pillared mansion of stone and park stand within the Residency Limits, as drawn, sealed, and secured by treaty. Like the prince's domain, this area also includes a number of interesting incongruities, such as a bazaar, opium stores, and, most interesting of all, a hospital famed far and wide for its success in providing 500 new noses a year to a corresponding number of Indian wives, who have had the misfortune to quarrel with their lords.

It is a curious conjugal custom, this of nose-cutting. When an Indian gentleman has, or has not, reason to believe that his partner is endeavouring to imitate his own sentimental versatility, he does not seek to send her away as we do, or to send her decently to the bottom of the sea, as the Turkish Pashas are supposed to do. He is content to divorce her from her nose. This process, sanctioned by immemorial tradition and connived at by the law, or at most punished as a little misdemeanour, has many merits to recommend it. It enables the husband to relieve his feelings and to regain his self-respect without fuss or expense. The lady, on the other hand, thanks to the English surgeons, has no difficulty in making good her loss. She repairs straight to the hospital, carrying her old nose carefully wrapped up in a piece of paper or a handkerchief, if she has been lucky enough to find it; if it

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is irretrievably lost, she comes without any nose at all. In either case, it is only a matter of a few days. Repairs over, the wife returns home none the worse, if little the wiser, for her experience, and peace is restored with the nose—until next time.

Next to the noseless wife, in point of popularity and pathos, among the patients of the hospital, ranks the wife who is sonless. An Indian nose, after all, is only an ornament—sometimes hardly that; a son is a necessity, without which an Indian woman's life is worse than death. A Hindu regards himself as dishonoured in this world and most surely damned in the next if he leaves no posterity to pay off his own and his ancestor's sins.

No less pathetic is the sight of the mother who—such is the power even of a little faith—commits her only child to the surgeon's care. And when the surgeon has failed, and the beloved one is dead, the aged mother, having decently bewailed her lot with the refrain 'Niputa! niputa!' (Sonless! sonless!) consoles herself and the self-reproaching doctor, who has assisted Nature, with the reflection: 'It was written on his forehead'—written, not in the metaphorical *kital* of the superficial Nearer Eastern Angel, but by the incisive pen of Brahma in the sutures of the skull. Fate in India has mastered the rudiments of anatomy.

My informant concludes with a rhetorical little sketch of another scene from these schools of scientific death:

'A Hindu pilgrim carries his brother, worn out by the fatigue and exposure of a thousand miles tramp from the Punjab, into the hospital, and nurses him there day and night with a woman's care and tenderness. Every day he prostrates himself at the doctor's feet, touching his boots with the caste marks on his forehead, begging him to do all that he can to save the sick man's life. The doctor does it, and then offers his condolences to the surviving brother. "What can we say?" is the reply. "Karma ki dawa kuchh nahin hai" (There is no medicine for Fate). And he shoulders his burden to resume his pilgrimage alone.'

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'The fatalism of the East!' says my platitudinarian friend, glibly.

The belief in Fate, my glib friend, is neither Oriental nor Occidental; it is as universal as human impotence. True, the Orientals use the term more often than we, or at least that is the prevailing notion. But that must be only because, having a greater aptitude for meditation and limitless leisure for cultivating it, they realize their own insignificance more keenly than we. We do not talk of *kismet*, it is true; but when we have done our best, or even when we have not done it, and failed, we call it hard luck. When a country parson in time of drought prays for rain—for, paradoxical as it may seem both to our meteorologists and to Allah, our parsons still do pray for rain, though, I believe, they have given up praying in time of an eclipse—and rain refuses to come, both he and his parishioners call it the will of God. Sometimes we go even further in our fatalism, and blame the heavens for disagreeable experiences solely and clearly due to our own palpable imbecility. Did we not call our South African defeats by the soothing name of disasters? But my platitudinarian friend prattles confidently on, as if he were under the impression that the frank recognition of our limitations and the consciousness of an inexorable power outside ourselves were a fruit of the East, like the infamous and indigestible plantain.

It is all a matter of faith. Faith! sole failure's bath, balm of hurt minds, helpless man's last resort, the West calls thee Fatalism, and spurns thee as a stupid soporific, and the West, on the whole, is right. But what fills thy deserted house in the West? Emptiness, cheered by the flitting phantoms of fallacies once credible enough, now merely grotesque.

But even Eastern faith's healing power has its bounds. Frequently resignation fails, and then one touch of despair makes the whole world kin on the surface as it is in its depths.

It has been said that suicide is one of the peculiarities which distinguish man from the lower animals, the other

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being laughter. And, certes, no mule, so far as I am aware, has ever been known to indulge in either. Judged by the first standard, the inhabitants of Hindustan must be reckoned among the most highly-developed members of the human race. For, though they laugh less often than we, they kill themselves far more easily. According to the report of the Sanitary Commissioner of one part of the country only, the United Provinces, no fewer than 676 suicides occurred during the twelvemonth ending December 31, 1904, among males, and 2,050 among females. In the towns of 10,000 inhabitants and over, statistics show a draw between the sexes, each of them being represented by the curiously precise number of 78 deaths. This equality cannot be a mere coincidence, for in the previous year also there were 78 male and 75 female suicides. It looks as though there were some method in suicide, as in other forms of madness. It follows that the vast preponderance of feminine self-destruction occurs in the villages. This is an extremely curious phenomenon, and a satisfactory explanation of it would be of profound interest to the student of Indian life. But the report, of course, does not even raise the question, much less throw any light upon its answer.

The preponderance of female suicides, however, is said to be due to the ill-treatment of widows and young wives. The slightest provocation is enough to persuade a Hindu woman to kill herself in order to spite her husband or her mother-in-law. The latter is, indeed, a rich source of family sorrows and funerals. Mothers-in-law all over the world appear to have been created for the sole purpose of making their sons' wives unhappy. But in Hindu society this mission is fulfilled with particular zeal and ingenuity. We often hear of mothers-in-law branding their daughters-in-law with a red-hot iron, an attention for which they are supposed to suffer under the Indian Penal Code. What wonder if young women seek relief in transmigration? After all, death is only one of the minor tragedies of life.

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But it is not always the mother-in-law's fault. Here is a typical example, such as you see in the Indian newspapers every day under the heading 'Inquests.' The deceased, a Hindu widow, with her daughter, had lived in the house of her mother, who, it appears, had chastised her granddaughter. This annoyed the deceased, who first refused to take her meals, and on the following day was found unconscious and foaming at the mouth. The police-surgeon pronounced that death was due to arsenic-poisoning, and the jury returned a verdict of suicide, *not* 'while temporarily insane.' Eastern juries do not deem it necessary to exculpate the dead by insulting the intelligence of the living.

But self-murder, though most popular among women, is by no means their exclusive monopoly. The Hindus of either sex are a shockingly delicate and fragile sort of creatures. Where we think they feel, and where we feel they brood. They require an exceptionally gentle handling, which they do not always get at the hands of the irritable sahib. You often hear of servants dying after a blow which they probably deserved, but which was only just severe enough to make an English servant give notice or, at most, swear. The only apparent cause of death is vindictiveness acting on a rotten liver. The law takes a very stern view of such cases, and I suppose the law knows best. But in many cases the poor sahib has my full sympathy, as the victim of a peculiarly subtle form of malice.

Again, you hear of a Hindu lad committing suicide because he failed to pass an examination, or for some other equally grave calamity. The other day such a lad, aged about seventeen years, in the Twenty-four Parganas, was sent by his father to the Cotton School. The authorities did not see their way to admit him, as he had not brought his last school transfer certificate. They, however, permitted him to stay on the premises. On Monday afternoon he was found dead, hanging from an iron beam. In another case a young man named Khagendro

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Nath Nag, aged about twenty-six years, having had a quarrel with his mother and brother over a petty domestic affair, poisoned himself.

This world is too hard for such brittle creatures, and perhaps they do well to betake themselves to another. They are creation's errors, and their maker owes them a reparation which, I fear, he is not likely to pay.

One more illustration of this incredible sensitiveness of the Indian soul. The other day a native magistrate sentenced a man to a fine of 200 rupees (£13 7s.), or to three months' hard labour, for calling the plaintiff *sharir*, a nursery word which means 'naughty.'

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CHAPTER III

A WEEK-END IN UDAIPUR

THE dawn was just gilding the skyline over the eastern hills as a sudden slowing down of the train awoke us. We were in Rajputana. Any doubt that might linger on the sleep-numbed brain was dispelled by a glance out of the window at the yellow, burnt-up plains and the rugged hills, shaggy with dwarf vegetation and wrinkled with the memories of ephemeral streams, and especially by yon group of humped camels kneeling by the roadside.

We reached the capital of this chief among Rajput States in the chilly dawn, and alighted at the station to find it in the possession of flags floating gaily in the breeze and of gloomy red-turbaned coolies, hugging themselves and shivering beneath their rags resignedly. The open space outside was packed with vehicles—smart open carriages from the Palace, brakes drawn by great artillery horses, tongas drawn by small, well-fed, optimistic-looking ponies, and innumerable mat-roofed bullock-carts, waiting to convey the guests, their belongings, and their servants to the various places prepared for their reception. It was now half-past seven. The station gradually filled with the persons invited to witness their Royal Highnesses' arrival—to wit, the Maharana, attended by a dozen of the principal officers and sardars of the Merwar State, all gay in their festive colours; the Agent to the Governor-General and his staff; the Resident in Merwar and his staff, all in full dress; European officers and ladies; and the precincts beyond were thronged by a silent yet eager-looking mob of Rajput men and women.

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At 8.30 the royal train steamed in, and the Prince and Princess alighted to the thunder of a salute of thirty-one guns, fired by the Maharana's artillery from the Eklingarh fort. The Maharana and the Resident were immediately presented by the Agent; and then the sardars, who were ranged along the right-hand side of the porch in order of precedence, were presented by the Resident; while on the left-hand side of the porch stood the European ladies and gentlemen, and further down the platform were drawn up the Maharana's troops, with their band. Presentations completed, the Maharana escorted the Prince through the station to the first state-carriage, while the Princess, escorted by the Agent, followed immediately after and stepped into the second state-carriage, and, the rest of the procession being formed, all moved slowly off, a serpent of many-tinted splendour glittering in the early sunlight.

I followed in one of the carriages, with a coachman in flowing white robes and turban and sash which seemed to have stolen their colour from the morning sky. Thus we drove along a dusty cactus-hedged road, winding across the valley and up the horse-shoe of rocky hills which embraces the city of Udaipur.

We first passed a colony of cenotaphs, marble-pillared and minutely sculptured, some of them crumbling, all marking the place where the Maharanas of Udaipur and their consorts have been converted to ashes since the end of the sixteenth century. Conspicuous among these monuments of glories and beauties long gone by stood the empty tomb of Singram Singh, the prince whose corpse was followed to the flames by twenty-one of his favourite wives, none daring to forego this last proof of affection, or rather to endure the consequences of a dereliction of their supreme duty to a lord powerful even in death.

The next object of interest was a leper woman, crouching by the roadside with her veil drawn up to her nose. You could just see that one half of her face was eaten away. She whined, with her hands outstretched, for the means of prolonging her misery.

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'It is a mad world, my masters,' I quoted softly to myself.

'What did you say?' asked my companion.

'It is rather cold,' I answered; and he rejoined:

'I was just thinking the same thing.'

The sun had meanwhile risen well over the mountain ring, and the valley smiled her greetings sleepily through the white mist. At intervals cottage thatches, square or circular, peeped through the green foliage of the trees, and on many a wooded slope and bare brown summit gleamed the white pinnacles of temples and shrines and the mossy ruins of obsolete forts. The cornices of the temples and tombs nearest to our path were crimson with Rajput turbans and veils watching the royal procession, and the road itself gradually became animated with the noise of men and beasts. In front of us trotted a cavalcade of uncouth camels, each bearing on its hump a stalwart, curly-bearded Rajput, with old-fashioned rifle across his knees and curved scimitar at his side. Behind us galloped the ponies of the tongas which carried our luggage, jingling their bells merrily. To the right and left lean horsemen on sleek horses curvetted and pranced and reared, reckless with excess of health.

Thus we zigzagged up the hillside, past trees adorned with coloured rags—the offerings of pious Hindu peasants to the spirits of vegetation—or overshadowing an altar upon which grinned the amorphous idol, red with an inexpensive substitute for the blood of sacrifice. The gods of Hindustan must be easily deceived. And close to these tokens of deep-rooted, indigenous faith rose the little spire of a Scotch mission church, in charge of a charming old gentleman.

Thus we drove on, along the dry moat that runs round the low, stout walls of the city, pierced with loopholes and festooned with pointed battlements, even as were the ramparts of Troy in the old illustrated 'Iliad' which thrilled my foolish boyhood. No doubt these stout walls did stout service in the days when warfare to the chieftains of Raj-

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putana meant what it meant to the heroes of Homeric Greece. Those days, though gone, are not yet forgotten. Behold a sardar in his gala robe of sky-blue satin, half-moon sword, and small round shield, swaggering medievally to the railway-station!

We have left the walled city behind and caught a glimpse of the Residency, a delightful little mansion, all white, with broad, pillared verandas below and Saracenic cupolas above, the whiteness of the walls being agreeably set off by the rich green foliage of bougainvillia creepers ablaze with purple blossoms. Now we skirt an enclosed cemetery, sad with the struggling ruins of Mahomedan sepulchres; and here is the solitary grave of a departed saint crowned with big stones which, in the rays of the sun, glitter like silver, and probably are tinsel. Now and again, in the midst of the sombre jagged hills, shimmers a blue lake, along the margin of which men wash clothes, beating them on the gray rocks and spreading them out to dry; and yonder is a troop of wild, keen-tusked pigs, rushing down the hillside to slake their thirst. . . .

Upon the crest of one of those hills gleams the marble palace of the Maharana, its lofty towers, domes, arched terraces, and granite gateways reflected in the clear mirror of the lake below on one hand, and on the other dominating the walled city which spreads from its foot—a mass of gray weather-stained houses, white cupolas, and green trees. The palace is a motley structure grown slowly round the peak of the hill on which, it is said, the founder of the dynasty rested after taking Udaipur. This spot forms the sacred centre of the princely home. To this kernel each successive Maharana has deemed it his duty to add, and the result is the grandiose congeries of epochs overhanging the placid lake, at this moment aflame with the glow of our host's father. For this marvellous Maharana, so stern, so bearded, and so brilliantly turbaned, firmly believes that, in common with all Rajputs, he is the direct descendant of the sun; wherefore the banners and heart-shaped fans of Udaipur State, her servants' badges,

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THE PALACE AND LAKE, UDAIPUR.

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and her new-fangled coat of arms, all bear in their middle the round radiating face of the Rajput race's progenitor.

According to another version the chief's special origin is traced no further back than the god whose adventures in the pursuit of his wife's ravisher are narrated with so engaging a contempt for probability in the 'Ramayana,' the endless 'Odyssey' of Hindustan. Yes, Rama, an incarnation of Vishnu, the All-preserver, if not the Sun himself, is the divine fountain of our host's family; or, if not Vishnu, at all events the well-known Julius Cæsar of Rome—so abundant are the resources of genealogy when its records are left to the imagination of courtly minstrels. Many of these tuneful inventors of celestial ancestors for the great ones of the earth are to be met with in Rajputana, living in the palaces of the princes, and repaying their masters' hospitality with epic mendacity. Our host some time ago even founded a school for the encouragement of so pleasing a form of historical research.

He is not unique in his appreciation of the value of rhapsody. All the Hindu chiefs of Rajputana, I hear, are liberal patrons of this branch of literature, and the proud owners of pedigrees whose length is only limited by the credulity of the listener. Yet they all look upon a hospitable Maharana with the reverence due to his solar extraction and sacerdotal character; for he is not only the prince, but also the high-priest of his Rajput subjects, and is worshipped by them as a god. I was therefore not surprised to see His Highness's head, in a portrait in the palace the other night, adorned with an aureole like that of any other medieval saint.

Such are the antecedents of the prince who rules, with a firm hand, over this desirable principality. And his character reflects the antiquity of his lineage. No more conservative soul breathes in this most conservative of lands. His Highness abhors railways, and the telegraph is a mighty nuisance to him. Yet, after a good deal of pressure brought to bear for a considerable number of years, he consented to allow both the one and the other to

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approach his rock-crowned capital. But only to approach. The Maharana would almost renounce his genealogical tree rather than the venerable quiet of his kingdom. Even as it is, when the affairs of State have taxed the princely nerves too severely, His Highness loves to seek repose in a retreat which I was fortunate enough to explore.

A gate leads into a shady park, and a wicket leads from the park into a high-walled garden, within which cloistered court opens into cloistered court, each court cool with the spray of waters playing into basins of marble, and drowsy with the perfume of roses and the tender cooing of amorous doves. Small iron doors in odd corners and narrow stone stairs lead up into corridors and alcoves lighted only by the coloured glasses of diminutive windows, through which the sunbeams slant upon the tessellated floors. The dados round the walls unfold deeds of prowess in the field. Here is a scene of gallant Rajputs, armed with spears and arrows, stalking the deer, assisted by Bhil shikaris; there are lion-hunts, tiger-hunts, panther-hunts, and huge elephants crushing through the jungle. And in the midst of this 'Arabian Nights' world you are brought to a stand-still by the sight of two London coster girls, in their black straw hats, economical skirts, and superabundant boots, leering at you from the panels of the iron door which leads into one of these soft bowers of Eastern sleep! It must be the doing of the railway.

The same agency must be accounted responsible for the glass chandeliers and glass tables and unwieldy glass-framed chairs which disfigure the new palace with what the East innocently regards as the fashionable luxury of the West. Otherwise our visit to that palace was ravishingly free from Western horrors.

It was night, and the moon had considerately refrained from interfering with the illuminations. We drove down to the edge of the great lake and embarked on the boats. The shores around and the hill-tops up above were aglow with millions of little earthenware lamps, whose cotton wicks and cocoanut oil traced every palace, every

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temple, and every bathing-ghat in lines of tremulous fire; and the dark waters beneath were one continuous fence of quivering gold. Similarly outlined to their minutest detail were all the kiosks upon the islets scattered over the face of the lake, the ramparts of the town, and the arches of the stone bridge which girdles the narrow waist of the lake; while amid the trembling lights and smoke moved thousands of turbaned and veiled shades, humming confusedly.

After half an hour's wondering we landed on the steps of the new palace, where the Maharana, attended by his courtiers, waited to receive his royal guests. A right royal banquet was followed by fireworks on the opposite shore, which we viewed from the roof of the palace, sneezing. And when, surfeited with manifold marvels, we set out on our way home, His Highness decorated each parting guest's neck with a garland of gold thread and tufts of silk, and presented to each a packet of *betel* wrapt up in green-leaf. The bedward drive through the labyrinth of the town, spontaneously crowded, supplied a fitting background to the stately hospitality at the palace.

The majority of the people over whom this stern, pious, courteous, and hard-working descendant of the sun rules are Hindus by religion and the upper-class Rajputs by race—hardy warriors and lovers of horses, who fear the plough far more than the sword. Below this proud martial class are the tillers of the soil, the fishers of the lake, and the hunters of the jungle, many of them dark men with straight black hair, high cheek-bones, and fat lips—an ungainly, not over-scrupulous, highly unintelligent, but abstemious and industrious tribe of aborigines, whom the Rajputs despise as Bhils and the Banias dread as robbers. Out of this rough material was, in 1841, shaped a corps which remained loyal through the Mutiny. It is related that, when a body of rebel cavalry tried to induce their Bhil comrades to join them, the latter readily complied, and, having accompanied

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their allies part of the way, murdered them all in the night—a truly aboriginal form of loyalty. Yes, the Bhils make useful instruments for the destruction of life, whether brute or human, in sombre earnest or in sport.

The Maharana counts fifty-one chiefs among his feudal vassals, and surely no vassals ever were more to be envied. Since the necessity for military service has disappeared, these nobles enjoy their fiefs as family estates, paying only an accession fee to the prince, and not always even that, and spending their revenues on the maintenance of regal pomp, each in his little kingdom, but all assembling to grace their lord paramount's Court on great occasions like the present. I have seen some of these gentlemen in the garb of peace, and they impressed me vividly by their feminine magnificence—silk turbans, immense ear-rings, beginning on the top of the ear and passing through the lobe, each ring of gold set with pearls; strings of jaspers and amethysts round the neck, golden chains across the breast, and about the ankles heavy fetters of gold. Yet these same men rejoice in the perils of the field, as the panthers of Udaipur have good reason to know, for the Hindu gladly destroys in fun the life which he will not take for food. But the wild pigs are protected from slaughter by the order of the Maharana, who preserves them for his own spear. Herds of these long-tusked brutes bristle over the country, even under the window of the Rest House where these lines are penned, and yesterday we were conveyed across the lake to the Khas Oodi to see a vast number of them fed in state. They appeared to enjoy their dinner, and expressed their satisfaction by grunting misanthropically.

We arrived in Udaipur on Saturday, November 18, and depart to-day, Monday, having crowded into three short days the impressions of three long years. It was a week-end spent in the Homeric Age—or was it in the Court of Harun-al-Rashid? I applied to my platitudinarian friend for a succinct description, and he spoke as follows:

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THE PRINCE AND THE MAHARANA DRIVING TO A SHOOTING CAMP, UDAIPUR.

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'A most interesting visit—awfully picturesque country, don't you know, and the Maharana the most charming prince I have ever met. Pity the Prince did not get his panther.'*

* His Royal Highness had gone out to shoot a panther, and shot four pigs, one small deer, and three hyenas.

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CHAPTER IV

JAIPUR

ANOTHER Native State of Rajputana, twice as large as the last one, and three times as dry. Towards the south and east the soil is kinder, and the crops more varied and picturesque—yellow-bearded Indian corn, white cotton-pods and sesame blossoms smiling in the sunlight, sugar-cane bristling forest-high, not to mention the tobacco-plant, than which, as everyone knows, no more cheering herb grows under the canopy of heaven.

But these things are rather the exception. The country as a whole appears to be a vast sandy plain, its flatness accentuated by the hill-ridges which cross it in the distance, and its thirst feebly relieved by the river Banas and its meagre tributaries—most meagre just now. The soil suggests penury and compulsory temperance, and the peasants are in harmony with the soil, their dull looks and drab clothes bespeaking a land rich only in courage and camels.

And so, by that abrupt transition from rural torpor to urban bustle so common in the East, we reach the station, broad awake to coming events, and we alight in front of three sardars, gorgeous in gold and crimson turbans and swords of state. They are three out of the twelve who alone are privileged to accompany the Maharaja on this solemn platform. Soon the Maharaja himself arrived in a state-coach and four—an elderly, dignified gentleman, in a black gold-broidered cloak and gray beard, reminding one strangely of an Armenian

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SARDARS AND RETAINERS MEETING THE PRINCE AT JAIPUR.

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bishop. He rides under a canopy of gold cloth culminating in a crown of gold.

The royal train is signalled, the guns roar a royal salute, the royal standard is hoisted, the guard of honour presents arms, the band strikes up the National Anthem, and the Prince and Princess of Wales descend from their carriage. The Maharaja, introduced by the Resident, bows profoundly to both, lays his sword at their feet, picks it up again, shakes hands, and the twelve noblemen are presented. The procession then moves off in a string of state-carriages, flanked with a few elephants and escorted by native troops; and among them leap demoniacally hundreds of Nagas—semi-naked semi-savages in crimson or green close-fitting jackets and short breeches, wielding a small round shield on the left arm, brandishing a long, straight sword with the right hand, while the peacock feathers on their heads bob up and down in wild unison with the shrieking of the long, twisted horn. The Old Resident, however, tells me that the Nagas are not so savage as their dancing, their sole inherent peculiarity being religious dissent. Orthodox Pandits also are in attendance close to the triumphal arch, ready with their Sanskrit benedictions and censers of sacred fragrance, while the women's songs of welcome are drowned in the din of wheels, hoofs, harness, and other musical instruments.

Thus we move on between dust-clothed cactus hedges, Rajput turbans, and mud windowless huts and a few low buildings which are not quite shops. 'Why is not the road watered?' I asked of the Old Resident, and he replied: 'We cannot afford it; every drop of water is precious this year.'

I leave the procession at the splendid Residency mansion and proceed to the city of Jaipur—a busy, money-dealing town, set in a brown desert, which is supposed to be the bed of a dried-up lake, and surrounded by rocky, mangy-looking, wickedly-scarped hills, upon the peak of one of which stands the Tiger fort, and upon that of another

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a white-domed temple. From the foot of these hills spreads the capital, with its 150,000 inhabitants—a colossal pink-and-white bazaar, encircled by thick walls, loopholed and crenellated, and pierced with seven gates, as was Thebes of old.

Having traversed the extra-mural market-place, with its crowds of sombre peasants and gaily-turbaned citizens, buying and selling the products of the fields, and its legions of persistent cripples, I pass under a fortified gateway into the main street. It is a broad, sun-flooded, dust-clouded thoroughfare of corn-shops and steep stone stairs of temples thronged with brightly-veiled women and other worshippers of the gods. Here and there low-browed arches open into mysterious courts, and over the shops run rows of latticed windows, peeping down upon a stream of dyspeptic little donkeys, buffaloes, small sedan-chair-like tongas, drawn by huge bullocks, whose horns are painted red or green, pariah dogs snapping at the flies, disdainful camels, plentifully-caparisoned elephants, simple-minded goats, and incurious human bipeds.

Here is a pious Hindu washing the brass pots and pans which form the foundation of his spiritual life; there a woman seated in the sand turns patiently a hand-mill; a little lower down another woman is winnowing grain in a scoop-shaped fan; a third collects the dung of various beasts from the road, puts it into a basket, and carries it off on her head, strutting like a queen crowned with diamonds. Whence do these peasant women of the East derive their regal carriage? There, again, round a deep well—the only spring that appears to contain any water—stands a cluster of lissom lasses, filling their rotund, neckless and handleless red pitchers, and exchanging the news of the day. And amidst this busy mass roams the Indian bull, even more impressive and oppressive than the Indian policeman.

The latter may tyrannize over his inferiors; he is a slave to everyone else. But the Brahmani bull is the lord of

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Main Street of Jaipur.

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all. He roams over the smiling meadows or through the squinting streets of village and town at pleasure, neither toiling nor moiling, but despoiling those who do. He is universally revered and feared, and experiences no difficulty in making his aims clear and his claims good. When the grass of the pastures and the tender stalks of the cornfields begin to grow, he sets out on a tour through the bazaar, blundering and plundering round the narrow lanes, pausing before every counter that tempts his jaded palate, and levying tribute from reverent and willing hands.

Some of these quadruped despots of the land are milk white, and their large solemn eyes appear in very truth to bless the gods who have created men to labour for them and cows to minister to them. Is there any greater bliss conceivable to mortal bull than an illimitable choice of food and wives? But there be also many that are neither gentle nor serene. They are black beasts, black in colour and in disposition, with immense double chins which stretch in unseemly frills from the lower lip to the belly, swaying to and fro their flaccid bashaw-like insolence. Insolent also is the rigid hump, which curves backwards after the fashion of a fossilized Liberty cap. Careless, godless, and lawless, these four-legged Brahmans form excellent emblems of priestly indolence, battening on the sweat and the superstition of their social slaves—the wretched tillers of the soil. Were I a Brahman, I would choose two of these bulls, rampant, for my coat of arms, and for motto the Pindaric ὀρθὴ κνωδάλων ὕβρις.

And so I reach another great fortified gate, pass under its heavy arch, and find myself in the front courtyard of the palace. I wind my way through a multitude of retainers clad in crimson and gold and bearing silver maces, warriors armed with quaint rifles of deep antiquarian interest, and I reach a third archway of marble fretwork and many delicately-latticed balconies. But the gate—a huge thing of polished brass, also pierced in delicate designs—flashes forbiddingly in the sun. I am told that it will only be opened for the Prince, who is to come

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shortly to hold a Durbar. I was not prepared for a Durbar; nevertheless, as life is short and the hotel a long way off, I graciously consent to adorn the reception with my flannelled presence.

An enormously fat Bengali gentleman, in a black shirt which came down to his knees, and a low black cap, with a black band fluttering behind after a deprecating fashion, advanced and smilingly conducted me into the Divan Khana, or Council Hall—a great square pavilion with a marble colonnade running round three sides of it; on the fourth a row of balconies, and in the middle, close under the great glass chandelier which glittered from the vaulted roof, a canopied daïs, all silver and gold, ready for the royal guest. In the centre of the pediment shone the Rajput sun, and around it scintillated compact rows of nobles of many degrees in their silks and golden turbans, plumes and tassels, pearled ears and necklaces, some of them in voluminous calico petticoats. Behind them upon the carpet sat, cross-legged, numerous retainers, splendidly apparelled and barefooted, glad to be allowed to dispense with the dignified discomfort of European chairs. One of them mutters inaudibly, with eyes closed fast to the vanity of this world, telling his beads. He must be a Mahomedan, and it is the hour of prayer. Another is twiddling his toes, unaffectedly.

Then the gray-bearded Maharaja, attended by the British Resident, came in to the strains of the Jaipur anthem, followed by two high-backed thrones of red velvet and gold. These were placed on the daïs, the fan and fly-flap bearers took their positions behind them, and the Maharaja sat down on one of the thrones. The Princess, with her ladies-in-waiting and other members of her suite, then appeared modestly on one of the balconies aloft; for no mere woman is publicly recognised in zenana-ridden Rajputana. The Old Resident tells me that when the Duke of Connaught visited Jaipur years ago he was sorely offended at the lack of official consideration shown to his Duchess. It is even said that he spoke words of wrath to

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the Maharaja. But the latter bowed profoundly and remained unconvinced and unreformed, unless the laying his sword at the feet of the Princess on the railway-platform was a sign of repentance.

Not many minutes after, an attendant arrived and whispered into the Maharaja's ear that his royal visitor was approaching. Thereupon the Maharaja quitted his throne, walked across the daïs, and down into the lower court, where his interesting troops mounted guard with their curious rifles. Almost immediately after, the Prince, in a simple carriage and pair, drove between the brass gates and alighted in front of the pavilion. The Maharaja did obeisance, laying his sword at the feet of his guest, and then conducted him to the daïs, where the two sat side by side conversing, embarrassingly, through the Resident.

The members of the Divan and other nobles were then presented, and, after a few minutes' silent, almost somnolent, solemnity, the inevitable garlands and the other offerings of hospitality were brought in. The Maharaja garlanded his guest's neck, an officer did likewise to the suite, whose white uniforms contrasted so refreshingly with the peacock splendour of their native neighbours, and up above in the balcony similar honours were paid to the ladies.

This was the second Durbar I assisted at, through no fault of mine, and I hope it will be the last I shall feel under the necessity of inflicting on the reader.

When the great ones had departed, I availed myself of the smiling Bengali's courtesy and inspected the wonderful palace gardens, which flourish, as best they may, under the fort-crowned rock. The tanks and water-channels were full of drought, and the trees drooped under the dust. The peacocks strolled about dejectedly with their tails contracted, and the very eyes of the granite puppy—a defunct favourite of the Maharaja's—appeared to look upon the world hopelessly from under the marble canopy on the top of a mound which would have been green if it were not in Rajputana.

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Having thus perspired through the planted parts and traversed a shady cloister, we emerged into the glaring greenness of the stagnant pond in which are kept His Highness's pet crocodiles. The keeper brought out a handful of ancient meat, and, hooking it on to a rope, threw it into the portion of the pond which was not utterly arid, and proceeded to emit a series of sounds which the crocodiles apparently consider enticing, for they presently came to the surface, four or five of them, and swam straight to the mud's edge. They must have had their dinner already—possibly one of His Highness's female subjects, whose washing, I hear, is sometimes concluded in the monsters' stomachs. At all events, the keeper had to utter a great many raucous notes ere the slimy brutes were induced to climb on to the dry bed, and, with mouths gleaming white, to snap at the proffered delicacies.

With a parting look of disgust at the hideous pets and a bakshish to their keeper, I walked out of the gardens and back into the city, pondering all the things I had seen and the meaning thereof. Further food for rumination was supplied by a closer view of the town. Here I see a museum, there a library. I cross the Botanic Gardens; there rises the School of Arts, and my cicerone, when asked how he came to speak English so well, answered that 'His Highness provided free education in an English college.' Yes, His Highness, though he speaks only a few words of the West himself, and though he sincerely scorns the Western estimate of woman, is a progressive Maharaja. And his city boasts railway-stations and schools, a meteorological observatory, a menagerie, a hospital, a gaol, and a heliograph kept by the wily opium merchants for a speedy record of the fluctuating prices of the pernicious and fascinating drug.

The regularity and width of the streets also proclaim the modern craving for method and expediency at the expense of naturalness. Do I not see outside yonder shop a turbaned tailor whirling a Singer's sewing-machine? and

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IRREGULAR TROOPS MEETING THE PRINCE AT JAIPUR.

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is not the front of the house over the shop adorned with Hindu dancing-girls, and close by with two highly idealized portraits of English gentlemen in smoking-jackets and silk hats? Above all, is not the whole city painted pink and white? It is true, the uniformity of the painting suggests a thing done by order, and its freshness a thing done for the nonce. It is also true that the inquisitive eye easily detects behind the painted façades walls dim with the dirt and grime of ages. But what of that? Does not civilization mean the keeping up of appearances?

But the pinched faces of the peasants, the multitude of limping cripples, the sight of the squalid lanes, what tale do they tell? Happy and thrice happy is the impetuous earth-runner who, note-book in one hand and camera in the other, rushes and crushes through the universe seeking what he may admire. He loves to describe the brilliance and the bulk of state elephants. He speaks fluently of the glamour of the East, and, I charitably hope, he sees it, where I only see its ghastliness. In his pages squalor is magically translated into splendour. Happy mortal! In his pages also the dreams of a fevered fancy are raised to the dignity of historic facts, and facts are twisted into illustrations of a state of things which has never existed save in the visions of delirious sentimentality.

Thus, before coming to Jaipur, I had read greedily of bazaars sparkling with marble sculptures, diamond jewellery, and silk draperies. Where are they? Here also, I was told, one sees and handles real gold mohurs—a pleasant change after the everlasting silver rupee and paper notes of British India. I confess to a tender love for gold, and those heavy pieces of the warm yellow metal, with their sprigs on the obverse, make my heart glad; but I cannot find them in the bazaars of Jaipur. Perhaps they have all been gathered in the purses of her nobles.

The city was built in 1728 within these walls so high and so thick, and was populated with the inhabitants of Amber, now a city of deserted palaces and silent streets. It was built on an imposing scale; but its houses, its

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mosques, and its temples very often present an unblushing stucco face, and pretentious gentility ogles at you from every side. Alas! you cannot have both Oriental magnificence and Occidental economy at the same time. But the reigning Maharaja, like other mortals, is earnestly anxious to reconcile the irreconcilable. In this he is only carrying on the traditions of his house. He is a descendant of the chiefs who acknowledged the supremacy of the Moghul Emperors without striking a blow. The Prince whom the invaders found ruling here was the craven Baharma, one of the twelve sons of the patriarchal Prithwi Raja. During his reign Rajputana experienced the advent of the Crescent, which inaugurated a long period of turmoil and turned the country into a battle-ground for rival ambitions.

Jaipur alone escaped the deluge. Raja Baharma, alarmed at the enemy's approach, hastened to purchase safety at the cost of dignity, thus managing to steer amid the storms which raged over the rest of the country, and to achieve immortality as the first Rajput Prince who bent the knee to the power of Islam. His son went even further, and earned security for himself and a lasting disgrace for his posterity by contracting a matrimonial alliance with the Mahomedan upstarts and thus defiling for ever the purity of his noble solar pedigree. Several generations later, a Raja of Jaipur joined Udaipur in an effort to shake off the foreign yoke, and tried to wipe out the taint of the infidel blood by marrying a princess of the latter kingdom and proclaiming her offspring heir to the throne in preference to elder children by his other wives. But this tardy experiment proved a failure, and the State before the end of the eighteenth century was torn by dissension, was bled by the Mahrattas, and became the theatre of a confusion which ended only by the recognition of the British suzerainty in 1818.

Since then Jaipur, though it has suffered sorely from domestic strifes about the succession, has been protected by the British against attack from abroad, and, forced to adopt administrative decency, it gradually recovered from

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the wounds of ancient anarchy. In return, it proved of signal assistance in the time of the Mutiny. The then Maharaja was rewarded for his fidelity with the grant of the Pargana of Kot Kasim, with the privilege of adoption, and with a knighthood; while his energy and liberality during the great famine, ten years later, earned him two additional guns of salute, which, after the lapse of another decade, were raised to the magnificent total of twenty-one.

All these noisy and showy things are, I presume, the outcome of our unquestioning belief in the Oriental's capacity for mistaking the shadow for the substance. It is a deep-rooted belief, and, when indulged to excess, fruitful of many failures, both in olden times and at this present hour. The Oriental may in some ways be as simple as a child; he certainly is quite as shrewd. Those amongst my readers who have been children, and who retain some memory of that golden age, will agree with me that a profound reverence for the governess can easily coexist with a very keen perception of her weaknesses. There is no better school for satire than the schoolroom, unless it be an Oriental bazaar. But these are no holiday topics.

When the Prince died in 1880 without a direct heir, his honours and his loyalty were bequeathed to a youth whom he had adopted on his deathbed. This is the gray-bearded Maharaja whom I have just had the honour to meet. If I have been somewhat splenetic in my comments on his dominions, my severity may be partly due to the hotel dinner, a meal which I can only describe as an excellent alternative for starvation. Perhaps for a really 'successful' account of a country it is best to act on the advice of the innocent author of a work on India I have just been reading. Speaking of this very city, he says: 'If only a short visit is being made, it will be better to write a day or two beforehand.' I wish I had written my book a year or two before I saw the things which I am attempting to describe.

I will end with a brief summary of what we brilliant

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journalists call interesting events: pig-sticking before breakfast, and after luncheon a tiger-hunt, which I will not describe, though I did not see it. The day ended with illuminations and a banquet at the palace which was unlike the hotel dinner. After the banquet was produced for our admiration the tiger which the Prince had shot in the afternoon. It was a brilliant entertainment, followed by an exhibition of native music and jugglery. But I cannot forget that the Maharaja, in proposing the toast of his royal guests, dwelt on the terrible distress of his subjects, and announced that he intends to commemorate the visit by a contribution of four lakhs of rupees to the Famine Fund. From the lady who sat next to me at the banquet I also gathered that thousands of wretched peasants have already migrated with their flocks and families to less threatening regions, having thus improved on the course which they adopted during the last famine. Then they took their flocks only with them, and when they returned home found their families dead.

'A most undinnerlike subject of conversation,' says my platitudinarian friend; and I answer with my natural meekness:

'Quite so—in fact, famine and dinner are mutually exclusive.'

And so farewell to poor Jaipur and its public-spirited Maharaja. May the rain-god have mercy upon them!

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CHAPTER V

IN THE DESERT

We left Jaipur in the late afternoon, and moved towards the setting sun, across the desolate fields of Marwar—the Land of Death, a name most mournfully appropriate. A few goats, small deer, several peacocks—a bird as common in Rajputana as the goose is in England, but rather more highly respected—and a few brown children, roam despondently about, clothed in dust. A few mud hovels sprawl here and there, and at intervals a sentry shadow stands, turbaned and motionless, against the blood-red sky. It stands on thin bare legs, but wrapped up to the nose, in anticipation of the bitter night cold. Then the flames of the heavens are extinguished, and the darkness has hidden the hungry plain and its hungry, shivering children from view.

We had an excellent dinner in the train, and afterwards slept the dreamless sleep given to the well-fed, the warmly clad, and the unimaginative. When I opened my eyes again it was daylight, and the yellow, silent face of the desert stared at me on both sides of the road. Sand, sand, sand, and then all of a sudden a cluster of royal tombs, a few donkeys, a camel or two, and an occasional turban. We are drawing near Bikaneer, a flat city spreading in the midst of a flat plain, the very sight of which makes you feel instinctively for your water-flask.

It is the capital of a semi-independent feudal State whose area covers, to be precise, between 17,000 and 23,000 square miles—just enough to support, in a Lenten manner, a population of 300,000 souls—a melancholy

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island of life in a great ocean of sand, with many a dull, storm-furrowed sandhill, growing in length year after year, and a few woebegone hamlets, shrinking year after year. They appear to have strayed into the desert long ago, and to have been doing penance for their error ever since.

Even the railroad, in midsummer, is buried under waves of sand, driven by the hot westerly wind. I hear, however, that one little spot in the north-east corner of the country may, at moments of optimistic exaggeration, be described as fertile, thanks to the proximity of the river Sotra, which, in years exceptionally prosperous, translates that favoured district into a malarious swamp. For the rest, the one stream that fringes Bikaneer's frontier seldom condescends to flow, and then only after a parsimonious fashion. It flows reluctantly for a brief while, and then disappears in the sand, leaving the plain more thirsty than ever. But here I see not even this ironical semblance of a flood. The tanks of the neighbourhood contain just as much water as is necessary for the support of a few fever-giving mosquitoes. The capital of Bikaneer is literally a city built in the desert, on soil hard and stony as a local money-lender's heart.

I ask the Old Resident concerning its origin and purpose. He knows nothing about its origin, and as to its purpose he can only tell me that in the good old days of picturesque unrule the merchants and usurers of Marwar used to retire to this city, and to enjoy their unholy fortunes in sand-secured peace and impunity. The descendants of those Marwari gentlemen still live here, migrating to Calcutta and other commercial centres for six months in the year, and spending the rest of their time in these palatial dwellings. From other springs of wisdom I draw the knowledge that the peasantry of Bikaneer consume their lives in a perennial wrestle with Nature. Now and again Nature wins, and the poor peasants have to quit their miserable hamlets and to set out, with their women, children, camels, and goats, in

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search of fodder. Those who are so inclined are at liberty to appropriate as much of the cruel soil as they can till, on payment of a small tribute to the State, which, with the exception of the feudal sardars, is the one land-owner. Interesting to find the Socialist dream realized in the desert! Perhaps it could be realized nowhere else.

Hard soils produce hardy creatures, and hot climates conduce to long horns, says the Wise One. Here, as in Arabia and Barbary, the horses are wiry, the camels almost as fleet of foot as the horses, and more patient of fatigue. I will say nothing of the horned majesty of the bulls, sacred to Siva: they are things to worship in awesome silence. As to the men, their valour was amply proved during the Mutiny, when they helped us to subdue their brethren of other parts of Hindustan. But at this moment there is no occasion for the display of warlike qualities.

We have found the little railway-station in that festal ferment which I am beginning to dread—so brilliant it is, so monotonous in its organized variety, so unreal and theatrical. Flags up above, and below sardars, thakors, seths, sahukars, all in full Durbar magnificence. The roof of the station is in the possession of the High School boys—grave youths in turbans and flowing robes of red or orange, marshalled alternately, each armed with a little banner of corresponding colour, which they are drilled to wave at the word of command.

But the enclosure, on the other hand, is, as usual, not dull. On one side I see drawn up the Camel Corps—a body of lean, sturdy, curly-bearded Rajputs in red or green uniforms, each breast decorated with the medals of two campaigns, all erect on red-tasselled camels, whose faces proclaim intense contempt for the world and its banalities. On the other side stands a medley of bright-draped palanquins resting on the sand, of tongas drawn by bullocks all but hidden beneath silver-broidered cloth, and close by towers a triad of mountainous elephants,

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bearing gold-pillared pavilions on their backs, and scooping up the sand with their trunks—scooping it up and scattering it over the brocade of gold which flaps down their flanks. I wonder how the elephant managed to fill with this clumsy implement of his the bath of Vishnu's wife what time he acted as Her Divinity's valet, as is narrated by those who profess to know. But the sight I never hoped to see on this planet is yonder carriage and pair of camels, soaring above humbler vehicles, grandly grotesque.

The Maharaja has arrived—a well-groomed young gentleman with a faultless English accent, an English vocabulary which never fails him, and a manner worthy of his noble blood. For, though he is saluted only by seventeen guns, he is the descendant of a long line of gallant Rajputs, never, he boasts, contaminated by intermarriage with the Mahomedan parvenu. One of His Highness's ancestors founded this dynasty in the fifteenth century, and another was rewarded for his loyalty in 1857 with a gift of forty-one villages—a welcome addition to his slender income of £10,000 a year, eked out by rare contributions from his nobles. It is the custom of the land that, in lieu of military service no longer required, the vassals pay to their lord paramount a gift on his accession to the throne. The gift consists of grain, jewellery, and the most useless horse that the loyal Rajput baron can find in his stables.

The silver and gold maces, the red and gold fans, peacock fly-flaps, and state umbrellas, have taken up their traditional positions; the Prince and Princess of Wales appear, are received, and are conducted to four-in-hand carriages. The procession moves off along the main road, past the old feudal fort, over whose walls peep the kiosks and pinnacles of the old palace.

We defile now between lines of green-clad, gray-bearded warriors, each armed with an ancient sword, all salaaming kindly, and now between long rows of cavaliers mounted on camels or horses, caparisoned in velvet and silver

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CAMEL CORPS, BIKANEER.

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trappings, behind whom press crowds of decorously chattering spectators, and the hollow sound of the tom-tom salutes us at intervals. But here is another thing I never expected to meet outside a museum or Torquato Tasso's epic. On either hand stands a row of camel cavaliers, stiff with mail coats and steel helmets, their faces covered with visors which flash in the sun. It is a troop of medieval Crusaders reborn as Rajputs.

Behind us the procession has broken up, and the plain is enveloped in clouds of yellow sand, through which gleam a thousand turbans and the barrels of matchlocks. We drive past a cluster of low, flat-roofed houses of crude brick—such as Tasso's Crusaders must have seen in Palestine and hastened to make desolate for the love of God. In front spread the new Lallgarh Palace gardens, containing a few young trees which do not appear disposed ever to grow old, and at last here is the palace itself, a great pile of red sandstone, many-arched, many-domed, minutely carved, its small windows secret with stone lattices, its kiosks full of tame doves, fluttering in and out and cooing in the shade. It rises calm and cool out of the yellow desert, in the centre of that white canvas city which is to be our home for the next three days. We shall be comparatively safe here, for I am informed that among the many instructions issued to the subpowers that be is a strict command that 'All stray dogs should be cleared out of the garden before Their Royal Highnesses' arrival, and men posted at each gate to prevent wild pigs, jackals, and other noxious animals from straying in.' This order must have been very conscientiously carried out, for on arrival I found in my tent not one wild pig, jackal, stray camel, or mad elephant.

In the afternoon I set out for the walled capital yonder. In a few minutes I reached the princely fort and palace, whose balconies overlook the battlements, skirted a tank—large, deep, and dry—and found myself immediately transferred from the solitude and purity of the desert into the subtle smells and noises of an Eastern city, containing

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within its loopholed ramparts 40,000 human bipeds and an unrecorded multitude of quadrupeds. But all my preconceived fears, derived from other cities of India, were instantly dispelled. The smells are not offensive in Bikaneer, and the people, while more lively than the somnambulists of the plains, are strangely quiet. I drove through the bazaar, where black-bearded men bought grain, and masculine, almost breastless, women sifted it, where dogs drowsed and children played in the dust, where much-ringed lasses searched their lovers' matted hair—not for pearls—and wrinkled hags swept the mud benches outside their low mud dwellings; but in all this activity there was little odour and no disorder.

Then I wandered into the net of narrow, crooked lanes of clay cottages, crouching under the latticed balconies of red-stone mansions, lofty and richly sculptured—lanes so narrow and so crooked as to give the impression that the visitor is not supposed ever to turn back, but to go always on, like the man of God in the Bible. I went on, avoiding the teeth of grunting camels on one hand and the tails of dreaming curs on the other, rubbing shoulders now with an ash-sprinkled saint, and now with someone who was only naked, and falling deeply in love with this strange world. I loved the wide-eyed little boys who stayed their games to gaze and smile shyly at me, and I loved, if I may confess it without scandal, the bashful maids who gazed down from the small windows upon me: they lower their eyes as they meet mine, they lift them quickly and lower them again, their lips expand into a coy smile, and, I like to think, their cheeks are suffused with the local equivalent for a blush. I loved even the gray-bearded, caste-marked elders who, as the afternoon waned, began to gather on the mud benches which their wives had swept so clean, to smoke their evening hooka and to discuss the Prince of Wales. I am sure they are going to do that, for a more shrewd and sociable mob, or a more human one, I have never seen in any part of the globe.

They are sociable in the midst of the desert, these

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PROCESSION ON ARRIVAL AT BIKANEER.

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bizarre Bikaneer folk, clean in the midst of poverty, and, despite the drought, they look contented. It is not the content of apathy—that I know, though whence it comes is a riddle to me. It cannot come from a superfluity of silver, and as for gold, besides that which is firmly attached on the clothes of the nobles, I have only seen it in their hands. It amounted exactly to 110 mohurs. Out of this sum 101 belonged to the Maharaja himself, and the rest to the nine sardars who were presented to the Prince. The Maharaja and the sardars carried their respective *nazr*, or tribute, to His Royal Highness, and His Royal Highness touched it and remitted it to the owners. Of course, it is possible that there may be some more money in the State of Bikaneer; but, I suspect, it must be locked up in the coffers of the Marwari merchants who live in these red-stone mansions.

Worldly prosperity, for the bulk of the inhabitants, then, being out of the question, how can these brave, self-reliant, hospitable people manage to cultivate their varied amiability? The Old Resident is inclined to attribute their cheerfulness to opium. 'Every Rajput,' he tells me, 'takes opium from his infancy to the age of seven. Then he is weaned of it, and does not resume the habit until the age of fifty.' He went on to extol opium as the lone man's friend, the hungry man's food, the sick man's cordial, concluding his panegyric with a denunciation of the prejudiced ignorance which confounds this most invigorating and exhilarating promoter of happiness and social virtue with the narcotic and stupefying drug of Turkey known by the same name. The theory possesses at least the stimulating merit of novelty.

Still, opium is not everything. How can these people exist to enjoy the delicious cordial without water? This question flashed across my mind as, dust-cloaked and dry-lipped, I crept through the meshes of the town. All of a sudden the answer came in the form of two great bullocks pulling laboriously at something heavy down an incline. I approached, and, the good people making way for me, I

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found that the something was an immense skin bucket. I peered into the giddy depths of the well, and, several hundred feet beneath me, I saw rippling a dark pool. Having solved the problem, I drove once more past the old palace, with its stately balconies above and, beneath, the stables in which are tethered the Maharaja's steeds and elephants, adding new smells to the air and new terrors to sleep. As I passed under the walls of the fort again, the gray pigeons were retiring for the night into the loopholes in the ramparts, while the crows lining the battlements above cawed their good-night to the sun as he sank into the desert.

Next day I bade one of the beasts of the Camel Corps to kneel down for me. It obeyed with the promptitude of a thoroughbred Asiatic. I mounted on its saddled hump, took into my hands the lines which are fastened to either end of the spike that runs through its nose, and steered across the vast expanse of sand, bound for Devikund, or God's Pond, so called for the same reason for which our own graveyards are called God's acres. We shuffled noiselessly along, our shadows gliding over the goat-shaved tufts of grass, the anthills, the few black-beetles and the many pale green moths that haunt the stunted weeds of the desert. On and on we shuffled, my mount breathing audibly, and I breathing gladly the air of the wilderness, so crisp and clean, and enjoying that perfection of freedom which is only to be found where sky meets the sand and man is alone with his own soul. There must be a Bedawin or a St. Basil strain in my blood.

After a while, over the undulating sky-line peeped the white and red domes of the city of my destination. They rose, many of them, on delicate pillars of red sandstone or marble, round a great tank which from the days of old has received the ashes of the lords of Bikaneer. It gapes, now green and dry, in the midst of twelve sepulchral pavilions, each adorned with a carved procession depicting the supposed tenant of the tomb mounted on his charger.

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He rides to the funeral pyre with his doomed wives before him, ranged in order of lethal precedence, while behind him march the ladies who were his wives in all but name. The latest to follow her lord to his last bed was the Princess Dip Kunwar, consort of Raja Surat Singh's son, who died in 1825.

I rode slowly round this weird home of death, so still and so peaceful, its solitude intensified by one or two crested peacocks that wandered aimlessly over the scarred slopes of the rocks, and by the intermittent, subdued twitter of a lonely bird hidden in the foliage of a rare tree.

Suddenly upon the great silence burst the clangour of many sacred gongs. I could not tell whence the sound came, or whither it went. It died away as suddenly as it came, and the subsequent stillness was oppressive. I steered towards the point of the horizon where, judging by the pallor of the sky, the camp must be—for the sowar who rode behind me proved almost as deficient in ideas as the camel, both being surprisingly at sea in the land which they have navigated a thousand times. To conceal his own limitations the sowar, man-like, abused the camel in a hybrid dialect made up of Marwari and blasphemy. His eloquence proved most effective, when accompanied by the strap. And thus we bobbed up and down the broken gravel rocks and along the pathless sandy main till the twinkle of the camp lights inspired the camel with renewed zeal, and presently our ears were saluted by the music of bugles borne across the desert on the evening breeze. The strain meant rest and dinner for man, beast, and sowar.

This day was succeeded by two more, equally delightful. His Royal Highness had fortunately gone to Gujner to destroy grouse, and there was nothing for me to do but to feel happy. And I did it thoroughly, except for one night when, after a long camel ride, I retired to my bed sure of a long night's sleep. What I actually enjoyed is faithfully recorded in the following page from my diary:

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About 12 o'clock: Shut eyes.
12.15: Dozed.
12.25: Opened eyes, suddenly.
12.25 to 12.40: Investigation into origin of noises.
12.40: Discovery—Rajput sentries bivouacking and chattering round a red fire, like so many turbaned fiends.
12.45: Pyjama'd sahib swearing at ditto, effectively.
1: Back to bed again.
1.30: More noises. Sahib swearing to himself, ineffectually.
2: Dozed again.
3.5: Stampede in the corridor of tent, just behind right ear.
3.7: Up, furiously. Investigation—wild beast carrying off servant's provisions. Whether dog, boar, camel, elephant, or vulgar jackal, I cannot say precisely.
3.10 to ?: Repetition of above episodes at short intervals—monotonous and mightily irritating.

But, nocturnal episodes notwithstanding, I count this brief sojourn in the desert of Bikaneer among the red-letter days in my life's calendar. It was pleasant to roam between the peaked tents, pipe in mouth, looking idly at the flags floating against the desert sky, so fresh before noon and during the rest of the day so broiling. It was more pleasant still, when the sun became unbearable, to retire under your canvas roof and to gaze from its comparative coolness out upon the sparkling sand, at the low-caste hawks hovering against the blue heavens, and at the camels treading the plain wearily; to listen to the distant bugles, to the dull tramp of horses, and to be lulled to unconsciousness by the confused murmur of unknown tongues. Or at night, when the voices of the camp were hushed, to sally forth alone towards the city fast asleep behind its walls, and to wander under the countless twinkle of the stars, meditating at great length on nothing worth mentioning.

But now all is over. My kit is lying about on the floor of the tent strapped. From the glaring sunshine outside come the voices of the servants shouting one to another, the call of bugles, and the muffled thud of hoofs galloping on the soft sand. Close by stands a tree of the future, its young elderly foliage, in the pauses of all other sounds,

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almost contriving to rustle feebly, and the air is throbbing with the mid-day heat. Across the path in the distance tread heavily three camels loaded with flabby waterskins; the bunting up above flaps a drowsy, official farewell to us, and high in the vault of my tent flit two or three loquacious sparrows, come, I suppose, to chirp good-bye.

Now the camel carts are rumbling round, collecting the luggage, followed by carts to which are harnessed pairs of elephants, forehead, cheeks, and trunks gay with symmetrical designs of blue and yellow, tusks blunted and bound with brass rings, and aloft, god-like, sits the red-turbaned mahout astride on a ridge of wrinkled black skin, his knees hidden behind the broad fans which the elephant is pleased to call ears, his off hand armed with an iron grapple, the efficacy of which is manifest in the ragged condition of the sadly fringed fans of callous flesh.

It is evening, and the night lies black on the desert. On my way to the station I am brought to a standstill by a great red glare, with the necks and heads of two camels silhouetted against it. Round the wood-fire sits a chorus of Rajput priests, swaying to and fro and chanting an eerie melody, accompanied by the click-clack of brass castanets. They are ghostly, almost demoniacal, but they mean well. It is their way of bidding the royal visitors godspeed.

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CHAPTER VI

THE PUNJAB AND ITS PEOPLE

AT four o'clock this morning we crossed the Punjab frontier in the dark, and three hours later we had our first breakfast of Punjabi dust—gritty and pungent like no other dust that has ever set my teeth on edge. This happened at Bhatinda, a spot the component charms of which the brilliant Babu has admirably summed up as sand and wind. He might have added a few camels, which supply a touch of animation to the boundless dreariness of a plain out of which springs the Gobindi Fort—a mound of angular masonry, at this early hour wreathed in mist, domineering over an expanse of dwellings and shanties and railway workshops as pointless and spiritless as an academic prize epigram.

Here we transhipped into the North-Western train, and the royal party, having overtaken us, transhipped into theirs. I closed all the windows of my compartment hermetically, in an endeavour, futile enough, to exclude the all-pervading sand; but I failed to earn the sympathy of the Old Resident, who, with his usual air of callous superiority, pretended not to see the affliction.

'This is nothing,' he said, laughing. 'Had you been here twenty years ago you would have known what Punjabi dust meant. As you rode out you would suddenly see an immense cloud, red or black, according to the position of the sun, rolling towards you, and wiping the landscape out of existence. You could not even see the head of your horse before you. The only way to escape was to dismount and take shelter behind some wall or hedge and

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wait there for hours and hours with your eyes carefully shut until the air cleared again.'

I assured him that I considered myself most fortunate in not being here twenty years ago, and that I should have been even more grateful to the Fates had they never brought me here at all. Then he fell asleep.

We dash past the Hindu temples, European clock-towers, and green gardens of Faridkot, and directly after we are in the typical cheerlessness of the pastoral region of the Five Rivers, wherein the Aryan shepherds tended their flocks in the days of the Vedas. The five rivers are the Sutlej, the Ravi, the Chenab, the Jhelum, and their common sovereign Indus, dividing the country into parallel valleys. Between the Sutlej, which we crossed at Ferozepore, and the Ravi, which flows a little to the north of Lahore, rises an upland district famous as the cradle of the Sikh heresy. It is a broad upland, moderately populous and prosperous in the parts which we traverse, contracted and parched towards the south, ending in a steppe dotted with pale bushes which the frugal camels relish, and, when the heavens are propitious, fringed with long grass grateful to more luxurious cattle. Otherwise this plateau is the home of a great solitude, accentuated by the ruins of villages, dry wells, and water-wheels rotting in the sun, sad tokens of humanity long dissolved into clay and dark oblivion. Sorrow and weedy desolation brood over the land, save along the banks of the streams and the artificial canals, which, the Old Resident maintains, have abolished the dust of the Punjab. Save in these moist spots and along the railway line, trees are few, and their names unpronounceable. But where there is water, there rustles the dark-green mulberry, the stately palm spreads its shadeless umbrella aloft, and the pale Indian pines whisper their secrets softly to one another.

For the rest, the country so forbidding to man possesses considerable attractions for wolves, leopards, wild hogs, and the long-nosed crocodiles which swarm in the yellow

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streams or bask on their banks, in sunny and slimy bliss. The Old Resident, now once more awake, informs me that the annual official returns for the whole of India show about 3,000 human deaths caused by wild animals and over 20,000 caused by snake-bites, while the number of cattle which yearly succumb to both perils amounts to about 100,000. During the last year, he said, the Punjab witnessed an increase in both kinds of death. He further assures me that even those figures pale before 'what used to be in the old days,' the decline being due to the rewards offered by the Government for the destruction of wild animals. He has the numbers destroyed last year at his fingers' ends, and they are as follows:

Tigers	1,285
Leopards	4,370
Bears	2,000
Wolves	2,086
Hyenas	716

He anticipates a further diminution in the number of victims from the Indian Arms Act, which allows certain peasants to carry firearms for the protection of their lives, beasts, and crops. 'Such detached shikaris,' he says, 'ought to thin the ranks of the enemy, if they don't fall asleep, as they often do.' And he proceeds to fall asleep.

In addition to these terrors, the Punjabi peasant has recently been suffering from the plague. A good and ghastly specimen of the extent of the havoc is given in the last Provincial Education Report, which states that in one school, out of forty-five girls, ten died in little more than two months.

As though this distress were not sufficient, this year the hapless province has also had to mourn the victims of a great earthquake. In many places the shock was so sudden that few, if any, had time to escape into the open air, and thousands were buried beneath the ruins of their homes. In the twinkling of an eye whole townships were wiped off the face of the earth, and the cries of the

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wounded and dying were heard everywhere. In Kangra every building collapsed, and many people—men, women, and children, including missionaries—were buried alive, only 500 out of a population of 5,000 having managed to flee distracted, leaving their families buried. A few persons in that town were dug out alive after having been under the ruins for four or five days. In Jowala Mukhi a score of natives and 200 pilgrims perished while worshipping in the temple. But the survivors, characteristically enough, instead of helping in the work of rescue, continued holiday-making as if nothing had happened. The town of Mandi became a maidan, everything having been razed to the ground, palaces, temples, and private houses alike. But, as often happens in other than physical catastrophes, the upheaval which has turned the marble palaces of princes and gods into heaps of rubbish has, in many cases, spared the humble dwellings of the poor.

This calamity was due to the normal action of the main boundary fault which runs along the foot of the Himalayas from the extreme north-west to the extreme south-east of the chain, being at either end intersected by a transverse fault. The term 'fault' is applied to a number of fissures which divide the tertiary rocks from the older rocks at the base of the mountain ridge. These fissures, all of which run parallel to one another in the direction indicated, are subject to continual agitation, which at any time may result in another great convulsion like that of last April. The Himalayas are never at rest, but are still undergoing a process of development fatal to man yet perfectly natural.

The same calamity wrought sad havoc among the dead as well as among the living. Local archæologists are mourning the damage inflicted on many ancient monuments, especially on the historic Fort Mandi at Kangra and its numerous grotesque temples. But the Indian provincial governments will not fail to make these losses good. They always contribute generously to the work of excavation, restoration, and preservation of obsolete relics of the past all over the Indian Empire, so much so that

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the learned young men who form the Indian priesthood of archæology occasionally breathe the prophecy that a day will dawn when not a stone or a scrap of Sanskrit hieroglyph will remain buried under the soil. This is a consummation devoutly to be prayed for by all who realize the inestimable value of the archæological cult to mankind in general and to the starving Indian peasant in particular.

But I do not wish to be unfair. Thanks to that same Government, better days seem to be in store for the much-plagued Punjab. Lord Curzon has claimed that 'the growth of prosperity and population' that has followed the irrigation and colonization schemes recently inaugurated 'has no parallel in the history of modern India.' The sober fact is that the Chenab and Jhelum schemes have done much to provide a refuge and a living to thousands of people who otherwise were doomed to perish of hunger, and tend to promote the welfare of the country generally and of the army in particular. Much of the land let out to private cultivators is upon conditions which require it to be used for the raising of horses or camels for remount or transport purposes, chiefly needed in the Punjab.

The improvement of the peasant's lot is the best justification of British rule in India. Were every other vestige of that rule to disappear, there would still be good reason for the Anglo-Saxon to congratulate himself, with a clear conscience, upon the two million acres of scrub and waste land in the Punjab which have been converted, permanently, into fertile fields by the Chenab and Jhelum Canals. The combined area of the two colonies is close upon half that of the irrigated portion of the Egypt of a few years ago. When complete development has taken place, a great source of wealth will have been added to India. As it is, the value of the cotton and wheat exported from the Chenab Canal Colony last year, after the cultivators had taken all they required for themselves, was over 400 lakhs of rupees, or $2\frac{3}{4}$ million sterling. The Wazirabad-Khanewal Railway, built to

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View near the City of Lahore.

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tap the colony, paid 14 per cent. upon its capital cost, and the Government collected a large land revenue over and above the canal dues, which themselves afforded a profit after covering interest charges upon the capital outlay.

The Jhelum Canal Colony is in an earlier stage of development, and had a terribly trying experience last year with plague. The disease broke out in the heart of the colony with such virulence that men died in their fields, as well as in their houses, and a general flight for life took place at the most critical period of the season. Hardly anyone remained to apply the canal water, which coursed in streams through fields of withering crops. Offers of half the yield failed to attract labour at a later stage to reap what survived the earlier neglect. The *rabi* harvest, in fact, was almost completely lost. The English colonization officer and his native assistant, who helped with their own hands to remove the dead in the villages, both contracted plague, the native succumbing, while Mr. Hailey eventually recovered. The colony, however, thanks to liberal remissions of revenue, is now rapidly returning to prosperity.

Lord Curzon a few weeks ago claimed in Lahore that his term of office coincided with a period of progress for the whole province of the Punjab which not even the allied forces of plague and the earthquake have succeeded in impairing. He maintained that this progress was chiefly, if not entirely, due to his own severance of a portion of the district and the creation of a new frontier province. 'I believe,' he said, 'that a better service was never wrought to the province than when the tantalizing and anxious burden of frontier management was taken from its shoulders, and it was left to pursue its own agricultural, commercial, and industrial development unhampered.' This is a point on which opinions differ very widely. Sir Mackworth Young, the late Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, considered the service in question as an unmitigated blunder.

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Another disputable boon was the Land Alienation Act. Lord Curzon affirmed that this measure, 'which I assisted to pass in the early part of my administration, has already done a good deal, and will do more, to keep upon the soil the hereditary owners.' Sir Mackworth Young refuses to see any good in this measure. He hopes that it may prove a success, but he is not a convert to it. In fact, he fears that in the long-run it will work to the disadvantage of the peasantry whom it is intended to protect.

Where such high authorities differ in so irreconcilable a manner the humble student may well hesitate to decide. So far as I can gather from official reports, the provisions of the Act, on the whole, work satisfactorily, and attempted evasions are not numerous. It is said that the Act is popular with zemindars, or land-owners, and agriculturists alike. Money-lenders still complain, and it would seem that the business of pleaders has been injuriously affected. These are good signs. Nor are signs wanting that capital is being drawn into worthier channels of enterprise. The Act has, no doubt, produced some contraction of credit, but this effect was foreseen, and the question is whether the contraction has operated to help or to hamper the zemindar. The Financial Commissioner believes that such contraction of credit as has occurred is beneficial to the zemindar, because it curtails extravagance without depriving thrifty men of the means of obtaining reasonable loans. All this is highly satisfactory, and must be received with the praise due to a successful effort made on behalf of the material and moral interests of a very numerous and valuable class of the community, though it may be less numerous and less valuable than the peasantry. But I am not one of those who hold that the possession of wealth is a necessary proof of the want of other virtues.

On the other hand, the abolition of village self-government has produced, among other things, a result which is especially well calculated to bring home to the Administration the unwisdom of the change. It has weakened the idea of joint village responsibility for the payment of

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taxes, and has immeasurably increased the Government's difficulties in collecting the revenue. A case in point is cited by the Deputy Commissioner of Ferozepore in the latest report on the Land Revenue Administration of the Punjab which I have been able to consult. In that district it is the habit of many persons to delay payments to the last possible moment, very frequently with a view simply to harassing the village headman who is responsible to the Government for payment, but, under modern conditions, cannot ask for a writ against the defaulting individual until the demand is actually due. A well-to-do headman has no difficulty in paying the instalment in full by due date without waiting for all the taxpayers to make up the sum required. But a headman who is unable to command the necessary amount of ready cash, and whom the village money-lender has ceased to assist since the passing of the Land Alienation Act, finds himself in a very awkward position, no matter how good the harvest has been. The Financial Commissioner recognises that the evil is due to the enfeeblement of the sense of village responsibility, and expresses the opinion that it may ultimately be necessary to amend Section 97 of the Land Revenue Act in order to obviate this particular form of obstruction, if it becomes more general. As it is, things are in a very deplorable condition. In the report before me I see that during the year under review the total number of processes of all kinds amounted to 26,746, and this is considered satisfactory when compared with that of the previous year, which was no less than 39,314.

The unparalleled prosperity of which the late Viceroy sang may come in time. Meanwhile the ordinary Punjabi village is a mere cluster of mud-huts, lightless and airless, and separated from each other by malodorous lanes. The clay of which they are built is dug out of the tank which stagnates outside the village. To this tank repair the peasant's cattle to assuage their thirst, and his wife to wash his clothes. Beside this square of green

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infection stands a small white mosque, and over it droops a many-stemmed peepul-tree, sheltering the turbaned elders assembled in smoking conclave of an evening. There, also, the hungry and wayworn traveller, whatever his creed or colour may be, finds a cool resting-place for his bones and food for his stomach. There is no village or hamlet in this barbarous land without its *boitakhana*—a humble little shrine of direct human Charity—that meek goddess who has been banished from the civilized West by philanthropy; so lavish is the Punjab peasant of the things which he himself seems to need so sorely. Yonder he trudges—an ascetic dark face with the eyes and the beak of a hawk, his head a mountain of many white, tight-twisted coils, from under which straggle his raven ringlets; his body much wrapped up in blankets, though his feet are bare, hardened both to the stones of the road and to the stings of the cold. He trudges along, coughing, with a rope in his hand, at which tugs a black goat as ascetic-looking as her master, dangling her long, empty udder below. He cannot afford even the luxury of rice, but lives on coarse Indian corn kneaded into flat cakes which would defy any but a Punjabi tooth, on salt, and on the curds which he owes to that lean goat.

The Old Resident informs me that the Rajput section of the population live in the enjoyment of perpetual bankruptcy and sempiternal slavery to the money-lender. Even the craftsmen and tradesmen in the towns can hardly make both ends meet, while their *confrères* in the villages are glad to be paid, if at all, in grain. For, despite the recent irrigation schemes, the Punjab and its inhabitants, be they land-owners, be they helots, still depend for their bread partly on brigandage and partly on Allah; and the ways of Allah are passing uncertain.

And yet the Punjab is a noble mother of heroes, from among whom is drawn the cream of the Indian Army. In its ranks find employment, honourable, profitable, and congenial, all the masculine sons of this land who are not patient enough to till the soil or unprincipled enough to

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subsist on those who do so. Nor does the lighter side of Punjabi nature appear to suffer from the poverty and various plagues of the country. When the Mahomedans celebrate their *Shab Barat* the whole world is aware of the fact. Rough horse-play, reckless extravagance, and incendiarism, are the order of the night, which, according to the tenets of Islam, is a night in which the good and evil deeds done during the past year are weighed in the scales of heaven—a night to be spent in trembling and prayer by every true follower of the Prophet. The Punjabis prefer to spend it in a more heroic manner. Every year is heard a long tale of lives lost, eyes burnt out, hands scorched, beards singed, heads broken, and houses converted to ashes. So lively are these festivities, and so popular, that a Hindu proverb describes the man who enjoys ideal happiness as one passing his days as *Id* and his nights as *Shab Barat*.

Another point in the Punjabi character which indicates vivacity is the love for litigation—a point which is by some regarded as the result of substituting the rule of the law for the rule of the sword in a country unprepared for the change. The new rule, however, has not altered the Punjabi's old temper: it has only directed it into a new channel. The Punjabi still loves a feud dearly; but, instead of slaying his enemy, now he sues him. Says the Old Resident: 'A favourite device in the Punjab for overreaching an enemy seems to be to bring a charge for some petty offence under the Penal Code, and then, having given the victim as much worry as possible, quietly to withdraw the complaint at the last moment, or, better still, fail to put in an appearance on the day of trial. What do you think of that?'

I think it shows the Punjabi's remarkable susceptibility to the lessons of civilization.

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CHAPTER VII

LAHORE

A LABYRINTH of tortuous alleys, dusky and dusty, creeping warily between tall, tottering houses which often shake hands overhead or even kiss each other across the street. Gloom and silence sleep together in these crooked lanes, you say to yourself, until a sharp corner brings you into the bazaar and its multifarious pandemonium. The long fast of the Ramazan, or, as it is here called, Roza, is just over, and the Faithful appear determined to make up for the lethargy of the last month. I cannot even attempt to draw a coherent description of a thing the very essence of which is delirious incoherency. But here are some of the component parts of the picture which unfolds itself to my eye as I cautiously worm my way through the dust: silversmiths and blacksmiths, book-shops and cook-shops, cobblers, tailors, smells, sweet or savoury, and smoke rising from under simmering pots. Women squat outside the shops calmly, with trays of sugar-cane pieces, or fruit, or paper flowers, or trinkets before them. A cow is feeding on the yellow floral decorations of a triumphal arch, which, to my mind, shows as plentiful a want of taste on the cow's part as the arch shows in the man who built it.

Turbaned and ringleted men jostle one another, buffaloes and bicycles are butting one another, and the liquid tinkling of tonga bells is heard amid the chanting of the street vendors and the sing-song benedictions of strings of fat beggars. Ladies press timidly against the sides of the street, and in their anxiety to escape the crush allow

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their gold-broidered veils to reveal a portion of a baby face, not unpretty but for its freight of nose-rings. Up above, through the small windows of grimy, rickety, heavily-carved wooden balconies, peer keen black eyes of pale men, apparently only just recovering from the effects of fever or of the post-Ramazan feast, and here and there on a window-sill sits one of those females whose occupation is proclaimed partly by her superfluity of finery, partly by the white cloth which hangs outside the window.

Beneath these houses goes on the demoniacal dance of the bazaar, and amidst the noise, the dust, and the smoke, suddenly rises a marble or gold-domed mosque gleaming through the mid-day twilight, its aspiring minarets piercing their way up to freedom and the light of the sun to proclaim the might and unity of Allah. Not far off gapes the door of a Hindu temple, crowned with the picture of Kali in her necklace of human skulls. She is the wife of Siva—the All-Destroyer—patron of soldiers and ascetics. She is represented with four arms, one of which brandishes a sword and another a dripping head: a truly terrible goddess in blue, with bloody hands and lips and a belt of cut-off hands, trampling underfoot her husband and lord—by a mistake which, when she found it out, made her gnash her teeth and pull her tongue out, as she is depicted over yon gate. This amiable deity once claimed human sacrifices and obtained them; now, thanks to an unsympathetic infidel Government, she has to be content with kids.

There are many of these and other shrines, all bearing on their faces the marks of many vicissitudes. For Lahore stands on the highroad from Afghanistan, and since Alexander the Great's day few invaders of India have omitted to pay an unfriendly call at the city. In the seventh century of our era the Chinese Buddhist pilgrim found Lahore, much to his bitterness, a citadel of the rival faith. A few years later the Crescent came from the North, and found Lahore the centre of a confederation prepared to defend the worship of Brahma—the four-

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faced deification of prayer—of Vishnu, and of Siva, and their innumerable progeny, against the young creed of Mahomed.

For three centuries the native Rajas resisted the tide of Islam, but in the end the Sultan of Ghazni overcame Jai Pal of Lahore, who sought to forget his defeat in self-cremation. The Ghazni rulers were succeeded by the Moghul power. Under her new masters Lahore grew in size and splendour. Humayun, Akbar, Jahangir, Shah Jahan, have all left behind them monuments commemorating their reigns and their architectural taste or lack of it. The great Akbar's fame especially survives in the fragments of the fortifications which still surround the old city in part, and in the heavy gateways under which I have passed, wondering at the curious mixture of Hindu and Saracenic styles.

The Moghuls had in their turn to give the city up to the even younger enthusiasm of the Hindu dissenters, Sikhs, under the leadership of Baba Nanak, whose memory was celebrated in these streets a fortnight ago with much ritual and beating of drums. With this sect came a period of remorseless spoliation and depopulation, of slaughter and general abomination, to end only with the establishment of Ranjit Singh's rule at the beginning of the nineteenth century—the rule of the Lion of the Punjab, whose tomb rears its domes yonder from amidst the green palms. In its centre stands a raised stone platform, on which is a large lotus-flower surrounded by eleven smaller ones. The central flower covers the ashes of the great monarch, and the others those of the four wives and seven slave girls who generously immolated themselves on his funeral pyre.

Thus I reach the Fort. I enter by a great gate, portions of the walls of which are still covered with brilliantly enamelled tiles. On the left stands the Pearl Mosque, built by Jahangir in 1598, now a block of empty whitewash. Further on I come to a small Sikh temple, then to the remnants of Akbar's palace and the Shish-

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RANJIT SINGH'S TOMB, LAHORE.

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mahal, or Hall of Mirrors, a deserted and dilapidated cloister, its walls adorned with enamels of blue flowers and goddesses of gold, whose lustre has long faded, its ceiling partly ruined by the recent earthquake and partly propped up by beams, and everywhere, on ceiling and walls alike, amongst the floral decorations, glint dimly the small mirrors to which the palace owes its name. I roam for a while over the empty halls, and see ragged camp-followers of the British garrison drowsing where prince and princess once lounged. I will not weary the reader with the melancholy ruins of the Sleeping Palace, whose pathos Sikh and Briton have vied in turning to ridicule. The visitor sees here a kiosk in which the Moghul Emperors once enjoyed the music and the breeze of the Ravi turned into a blatant mess-room, and there the cool cloisters in which romantic princes of yore dreamed dreams of idleness and joys Elysian now accommodating the cockney soldiers of the West. To a similar treatment has been subjected the famous mausoleum of Jahangir, now surmounted by an English skylight.

Another imperial tomb—the sleeping-hall of Shah Jahan—has been transformed into an English church, its Saracenic dome replaced by a spurious Gothic spire. Even more adventurous has been the history of the mosque of Dayanga. Converted first by Ranjit Singh from a house of prayer into a powder-magazine, it ended by becoming the office of the Railway Traffic Superintendent. Lord Curzon has done his utmost to make amends to these buildings for the humiliation inflicted upon them. But it is too late. The dainty edifices in which sleep Nur-Jahan, 'The Light of the World,' the wife of the Emperor's bosom, and her brother, Asaf Khan, denuded of their marble facings and multi-coloured enamels by the hands of Sikh robbers, are habitations of desolation and desecration, the former being now used as a cattle-pen. The Moti Masjid of Jehangir, however, till lately buried in the brick ineptitudes of the Government Treasury, has, thanks to Lord Curzon, once more

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risen from the dead—a superb structure of spotless marble. Right and left, up and down, over palace, temple, and tomb, turn whithersoever you may, you see the hand of vandalism and decay. Fortune seems to have written over the city of Lahore in great black letters the mournful moral: *Sic transit gloria mundi.*

As I leave this home of unclean and unvenerable senility, my ears continue to ring with the dolorous strains of the beggars. In other countries beggars are made. In Hindustan many are born beggars, even as many others are born priests, poets, or lepers. They constitute a great caste, honoured and prosperous; also a prolific one, and their numerous progeny deserve all the sympathy which their parents have forfeited. Those who have taken the trouble to enter into the intimate life of Indian mendicity draw a pitiful picture of these little beggars, who, or which, exist somehow, as do the stray dogs and cats of the land, in verminous independence, nakedness, and semi-starvation, growing up into highly useless members of society, suspicious and suspected of all honest folk, uncared for and careless of the world and its canons of decency.

However, even Indian mendicity is not invariably a hereditary trade. Like other forms of disease, it is capable of transmission. The sight of one flourishing beggar begets a score. Nor is infection always fortuitous. The mendicants of India are a missionary sect, and, like other persons in possession of a satisfactory gospel, they like to disseminate it. Many of them carry on a systematic propaganda, inducing by precept as well as by example enthusiastic youths to follow them *in statu pupillari* and to beg for them. After a few years' apprenticeship, the novice sets up in practice on his own account. The results of the mission are most encouraging. According to the census of 1901, there are no fewer than 5,200,000 fully-qualified beggars in India—*i.e.*, in this happy land one man out of every fifty is supported in life-long laziness by the labour of the rest. This normal multitude grows indefinitely in times of agricultural distress. The faintest

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sign of approaching famine, or even scarcity, sends beggary up. For this periodical multiplication of the pest the credit is due partly to native benevolence and partly to the native conception of a good investment.

The duty of almsgiving has ever been a prominent tenet of Eastern morality, and, where morality means revealed religion, it is a tenet hallowed by the authority of inspired lawgivers. It figures very largely in the Laws of Manu, of Moses, and of Mahomed. In later Hebrew the very word for 'righteousness' came to mean 'charity.' As the wise man has well said, 'Since to keep the commandments is the best insurance for life, the giving of alms is an obvious measure of enlightened self-interest.'

'Whatever, Lord, we lend to Thee
Repaid a thousandfold will be;
Then gladly will we give to Thee.'

The sentiment is altogether in the spirit of Indian beneficence, save that an Indian might think the 'thousandfold' expectation unduly sanguine.

The Indian beggar knows his Laws of Manu, or, at all events, his countrymen. Besides, thanks to his training of centuries, he has developed a faculty for finding out the charitably disposed which almost amounts to second sight. Like vultures which have scented a carcass, or flies suddenly aware of a broken jam-pot, the beggars swarm with their wives and their children and fall upon the pies and rice and grain which the pious, anxious to propitiate the goddess of Good Luck, are distributing with a business-like care that certain outlay shall not exceed problematical returns.

In Lahore there are legions of beggars, varying in age from a hundred years to one week. The city is divided by them into sections, just as Constantinople is divided by the pariah curs and London by the Metropolitan Police. But, unlike Turkish curs and English constables, these Punjabi beggars do not limit themselves to their respective beats. The division is only a proof of their power of organization, enabling them to fleece the whole town

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methodically. Each section is regularly invaded on a particular day by the whole troop. You see them, a mighty phalanx of foul raggedness, bowl in one hand and in the other a long staff held as a king holds his sceptre, as Mercury held his caduceus and Circe her wand: it is an emblem of authority, or an implement of extortion, as strong as it is simple, and as simple as it is dirty. They need it not for support; for, old as most of them look, they are all living types of health and good-humour. And how fastidious they are! From a 'stranger' they will accept nothing but innocent coin, food being forbidden by their religious scruples. But with their own coreligionists they take all the liberties that are sanctioned by community of past transmigrations and of hopes for similar adventures in the future, assisted by the democratic socialism of the East. It not rarely happens that a beggar belongs to a caste superior to that of the wealthy person whom he afflicts with his importunity. In that case there are no limits to his capacity for patronizing his benefactor.

I comment to my platitudinarian friend on these things, and he enlarges on the benefits of the British rule. I do not quarrel with him, partly because it is not worth my while to quarrel with anyone, and partly because I am the last person in the world to deny those benefits, such as they are. But perhaps the best gift which the British rule has hitherto conferred on the people of the Punjab—a gift the value of which cannot be appraised in rupees or pounds, and one which is likely to prove prolific of more kinds than corn, cotton, horses, and camels—is the freedom to think as they choose and to say what they think. This was illustrated here in Lahore a few weeks ago when a meeting of the natives was held, under the auspices of the Indian Association, to protest against the proposal of the Municipality to present a farewell address and a costly casket to Lord Curzon.

The meeting was attended by fifteen hundred persons. Rai Sahib Sukh Dial occupied the chair, and, in almost the only English speech of the evening, said that the

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people of Lahore had no hesitation in honouring Lord Curzon as the representative of the King-Emperor, but there was a strong feeling against honouring Lord Curzon in his individual capacity. There had been some Viceroys, impervious and reactionary—for example, Lords Lytton and Dufferin—but no one, except Lord Curzon, had ever thought of insulting or offending the susceptibilities of the people by calling them liars, hypocrites, and the like. He had gone to the extent of saying even that their religious books did not teach unadulterated truths. To honour such an individual must be antagonistic to the feelings of the people, yet the city fathers thought it advisable to vote the presentation of an address enclosed in a casket which was to cost no less than Rs. 2,000. Their duty as ratepayers was to protest against such a proposal. Resolutions in the sense of the above were proposed and carried with acclamation.

After this, who can accuse the Indians of servility, or of want of practical common-sense? What becomes of my platitudinarian friend's belief in the Eastern mind's adoration of persons? The objection in this case was to the late Viceroy's personality, not to the Government which he represented. The latter, in the abstract, is highly popular in Lahore, and the other day, when the Sikhs observed the anniversary of their founder's birth, among the prayers, sermons, and praises of the great Guru Nanak there was a special thanksgiving for the British Raj. But loyalty to the semi-awakened citizens of Lahore no longer means idolatry. The Indians are slowly beginning to know their own minds. At this moment the city is full of rumours of impending strikes on the part of meat-sellers, dealers in *atta* and *ghee*, and other mortals who love the luxury of grievances. It is even whispered that the trading community meditates a general *harta* with a view to drawing the Prince of Wales's attention to their wrongs; and, meanwhile, there is a scarcity of vegetables, owing to the greengrocers' keen sense of what is due to themselves. Verily, India is growing shockingly civilized.

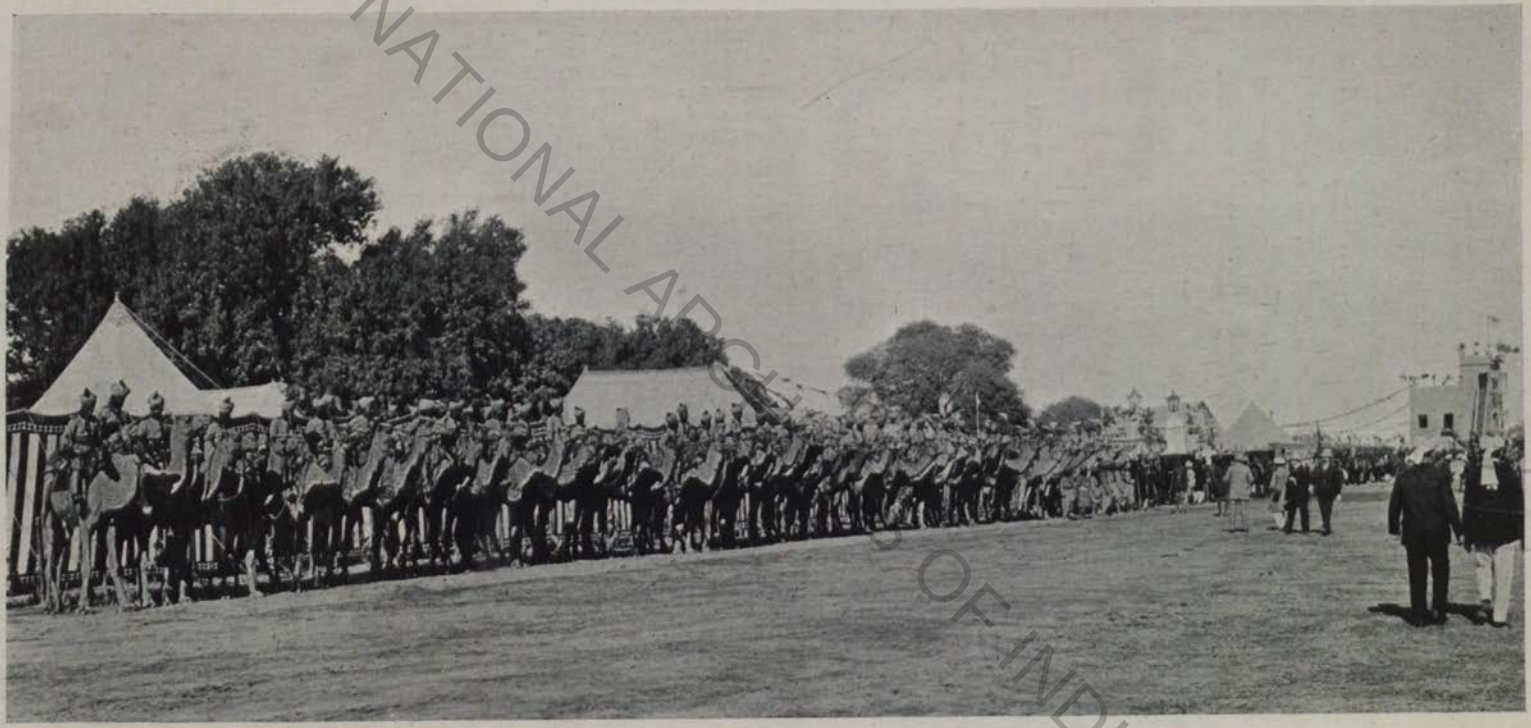
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This morning I visited the camp where the chiefs of the Punjab are assembled to honour the Prince. The camp is really a city of canvas, each tent a palace of silk, brocade of gold, and silver; and the inmates are as magnificent as their tents, each followed by a troop of gorgeous retainers, elephants in jewel-embroidered coverings and canopies, camels and horses. The fourteen-year-old Maharaja of Patiala, still a pupil in the Aitchison College, outshines them all by splendour of apparel and multitude of following. His cavalry forms an ornament to the Imperial Service troops, and their gallop past the Prince of Wales was a thing only less memorable than the trot of the camel corps. The other princes are also doing their best to shine. I had already seen them and scores of nobles of lower rank the other evening at the reception. Many of them overpowered me by their superhuman bulk, as well as by their ropes of pearls and strings of diamonds. Some literally waddled up to the Prince's daïs, clumsy with superabundance of flesh, and others tottered under the weight of gold. A few limped, but whether through gout or some peculiar notion of dignity I cannot say.

A dismal howl is borne to my ears on the cold night air. Beggars again!

Yes, I must say a few more words on this fascinating subject at the risk of driving one half of my readers to despair and the other half to sleep. In the evening the Mahomedan tribe succeeds to the Hindu, and the staff is exchanged for a lantern. Before setting forth on his nocturnal tour of depredation, each sturdy vagabond makes up his mind how much money he means to earn, and he registers a solemn vow that, by Allah and his Prophet, he will not taste sleep, or let anyone else do so, until the appointed sum is collected. Thus fortified with a good resolution, he sallies forth, and, as the night progresses, he tests the true believer's charity and endurance by crying out at the top of his voice the balance still due. The later it grows,

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THE MAHARAJA OF BAHAWALPUR'S CAMEL CORPS, LAHORE.

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the stronger his chances of success, for who, true believer or other, would not pay any sum to stop the infernal howl?

Who, save my gifted Sister Lucretia? She will tell you in her charming manner that 'there is something solemn in waking from sleep to hear the name of Allah cried beneath the stars in a kind of perpetual adoration.' Such is the divine gift of idealization. But, alas! we are not all gifted, or divine, or even feminine. To my Sister the Indian beggar is an itinerant apostle, 'carrying the highest culture far and wide.' To me he is a pestiferous peripatetic, disseminating disease and discontent far and wide. To her his whinings are sacred hymns, 'quaint and simple, full of what we in Europe call the Celtic spirit.' To me they are abominable interruptions of hard-earned rest. She reveres the Indian beggar, 'even in his lowest aspect,' as 'the conserver of the folk-poetry of his country.' I, fond of folk-poetry though I be, detest him as the conserver of the superstition and sloth of his country. To her he is one who leaves behind him 'strange memories.' To me he is one who leaves behind him strange smells and thoughts homicidal.

She contemplates one of these 'religious teachers' with angelic rapture: 'his whole face spoke knowledge, standing at the door one noon and asking alms.' In the native old woman's regard for the sacred rascal my Sister sees 'a trace of the feeling that paints the Great God as a beggar.' It is very pretty, very pathetic, and so forth, but it won't do. I prefer a more respectable god, and the most intelligent of the very people whose sentiments the good Sister believes herself to be interpreting share my prosaic predilection. Every Indian above the intellectual level of an old woman is now alive both to the private vexation and to the public burden, as well as to the sanitary peril, which these hordes of holy idlers constitute. May Allah have mercy upon them, for there is none in my soul, embittered by the loss of a good night's oblivion!

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CHAPTER VIII

ON THE NORTH-WEST FRONTIER

As we sped on from Lahore and its myriad discomforts in the spacious carriages of the North-Western train, it was sweet to think of the sore-foot pilgrims who in the good old days journeyed the same way under conditions so picturesque and so painful. For this is the road of the great Moghul Emperors, planned by the genial Padishah Babar, from Agra, through Lahore, on to distant Kabul. A seventeenth-century Englishman, who accompanied King James I.'s embassy to Jahangir's Court, describes this highway of the past as an avenue 400 miles long, of shade and coolness; but, unless the climate of the Punjab has in the meantime undergone a radical reformation, I refuse to believe my illustrious predecessor. Perhaps he wrote his account some time before he set out on his journey, or a long time afterwards.

Be that as it may, I cannot resist the temptation of trying to conjure up some dim picture of things as they were, for at this moment I have nothing better to do. Some help to the imagination is afforded by the few faint patches of this once magnificent work still discernible here and there. But the best stimulus is the Padishah's own statement. 'On Thursday, the 4th of *Rebia thani*,' says Babar in his 'Memoirs,' 'I commanded Tchikmak Bey to measure the distance from Agra to Kabul; at every nine *kos* to raise a tower, twelve *gez* in height, and on the top of each to construct a kiosk; at every ten *kos* to build a *dak-chauki*, or post-house, for six horses; to fix a certain provision for the post-house-keepers, couriers

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and grooms, and horses.' How surprised poor Babar and his post-house-keepers would be could they see us thundering past their superannuated milestones!

Those were brave days, indeed; yet not wholly unwise also was the preacher who preached that 'better is the sight of the eyes than the walking of the soul.' And my soul at this moment is quite content to let my eyes walk alone over the parched fields of the Punjab, and the large tracts which do not even pretend to be fields, but turn their honest, salt-encrusted faces frankly to the sun.

And so we reach Peshawar, the utmost limit of the British railway and rule. It is a mud-walled city, comparatively young and beyond comparison decrepit. Its main thoroughfares are broad, and the buildings which line them inconceivably ignoble. Sun-baked brick and reed, plastered over with mud, succeed to and are succeeded by wooden casements, hoary with the dust of decay. Where the plaster has fallen off, the gap is filled by the unkempt heads of women and children. The streets below swarm with the turbans of many countries—Afghanistan, Turkestan, Persia, and India. Most numerous among them are the Afghan traders—great white men with thin lips and keen noses, in baggy trousers of coarse cotton cloth, sheepskins, or loose cloaks in plentiful need of dye, and black beards died abundantly red. They are only less shaggy than their own pack-horses, which defile through the streets loaded with the silks and the spices of Kabul, bound southward. The women you meet in the open air are few but uninteresting, a dirty cotton sack covering them from top to toe, with only two latticed holes somewhere about the place where the eyes, or eye, may be situated—thus effectively saving the wearer from free respiration and the spectator from æsthetic disillusion. The young girls go about in their baggy trousers, bare-faced, bare-footed, and unwashed. One of them looked at me out of one gray eye, and I wondered how she came by it, for gray eyes do not grow on the Afghan frontier.

I stroll through the bazaar, seeing here fruit-shops

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resplendent with apples and pears, dates, pomegranates, and the golden glory of melons, while outside sherbet-sellers promise rosy refreshment to every thirsty soul for the humblest of considerations. Further on coppersmiths are hammering at red pots and urns, while cutlers are sharpening the blades which contribute so much to the turbulence of the district, and bakers are imprinting the finishing finger-holes into those flat cakes of unleavened bread which in Turkey are called Ramazan-pies. I pass cupboards gaily draped in bright-coloured kerchiefs and carpets, gold-broidered skull-caps and slippers, and pause in awe before a row of money-changers, each cross-legged under a thatch of green palm boughs, with a mound of silver and copper coins heaped ostentatiously in front of him. There sits the venerable *saraf*, gravely awaiting whom he may cheat.

I proceed on my walk between clean-fleeced sheep, tethered to plane-trees whose foliage is touched with the yellow, cold fingers of winter, and queer Pathans astride on clumsy buffaloes, a rope through the beast's nostrils serving as rein and a bottle of water hanging from what I may, for convention's sake, designate as saddle-bow. Here and there I am jostled by a man bending under a load of firewood, or a donkey brushes me, carrying upon its patient back two jars of sour, curdled milk, which reminds me of the *yaoot* of Turkey, while close by simmers a tea-urn that reminds me of the *samovar* of Russia. And here, again, is a row of butchers' shops with the carcasses of newly-slain sheep and goats suspended outside, blood-stained and fly-blown. In one place I hear the merits of a pair of woollen socks extolled in the flowery language of a Persian poet, and in another the genuineness of a silver coin attested by a direct appeal to Allah and his Prophet. But, though there are many rascals in Peshawar, I can see no beggars. These noble Pathans do not waste their time on begging. They take what they want.

But they are true believers for all that. Here a little boy sits immersed in a big book of sacred lore, and there

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a group of big boys are quarrelling over a game at cards; and on the rush-thatch over their heads roost many fat, contented-looking hens, and a Mahomedan cock struts amongst his harem, lifting his shrill throat over the vulgar noises of the bazaar. I pass shops in which deft brown fingers plait mats or baskets, and shops in which white jasmine blossoms are strung into sweet-scented wreaths. I see here idlers puffing solemnly at long-tubed narghiles, there tradesmen studying their long ledgers, and muftis on the flat roofs of the mosques reciting the *suras* of the Koran.

There is little of India here. Everything—the salaams of the men and the veils of the women, the trees, the sheep, the shops and the sherbet, the sounds, the smells, the faces and the food of the people—wafts me back to the cities of the Near East.

Suddenly something hard touches my elbow, and, on turning round, I behold a small basket let down by a long rope from a small window by an invisible lady, and beneath stands a fruit-seller. It is the Peshawar fashion of conducting commercial transactions.

Roused to the present, I observe before me a white edifice with minarets and pinnacles and texts in Persian characters. I take it for a mosque, until a gilt cross flashing from the top of a dome, where the crescent should be, induces the suspicion that it is only a church diplomatically disguised. I enter, and am told that it is in very truth All Saints', belonging to the Church Missionary Society. I ask if there is an English clergyman, and am conducted to him—a gray-bearded Afghan in turban, baggy breeches, and no socks.

'Are you the English clergyman?' I ask gravely.

'Yes, one of them,' he answers, not less gravely.

He courteously shows me over the building, and my eyes travel over the Creed in Persian, prayers in Pashtu, and hymn-books and Bibles in both languages. In one of the former I read:

'Kya-hi ajib aur be-giyas!' etc.,

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which being interpreted is:

'It is a thing most wonderful!' etc.

Verily it is.

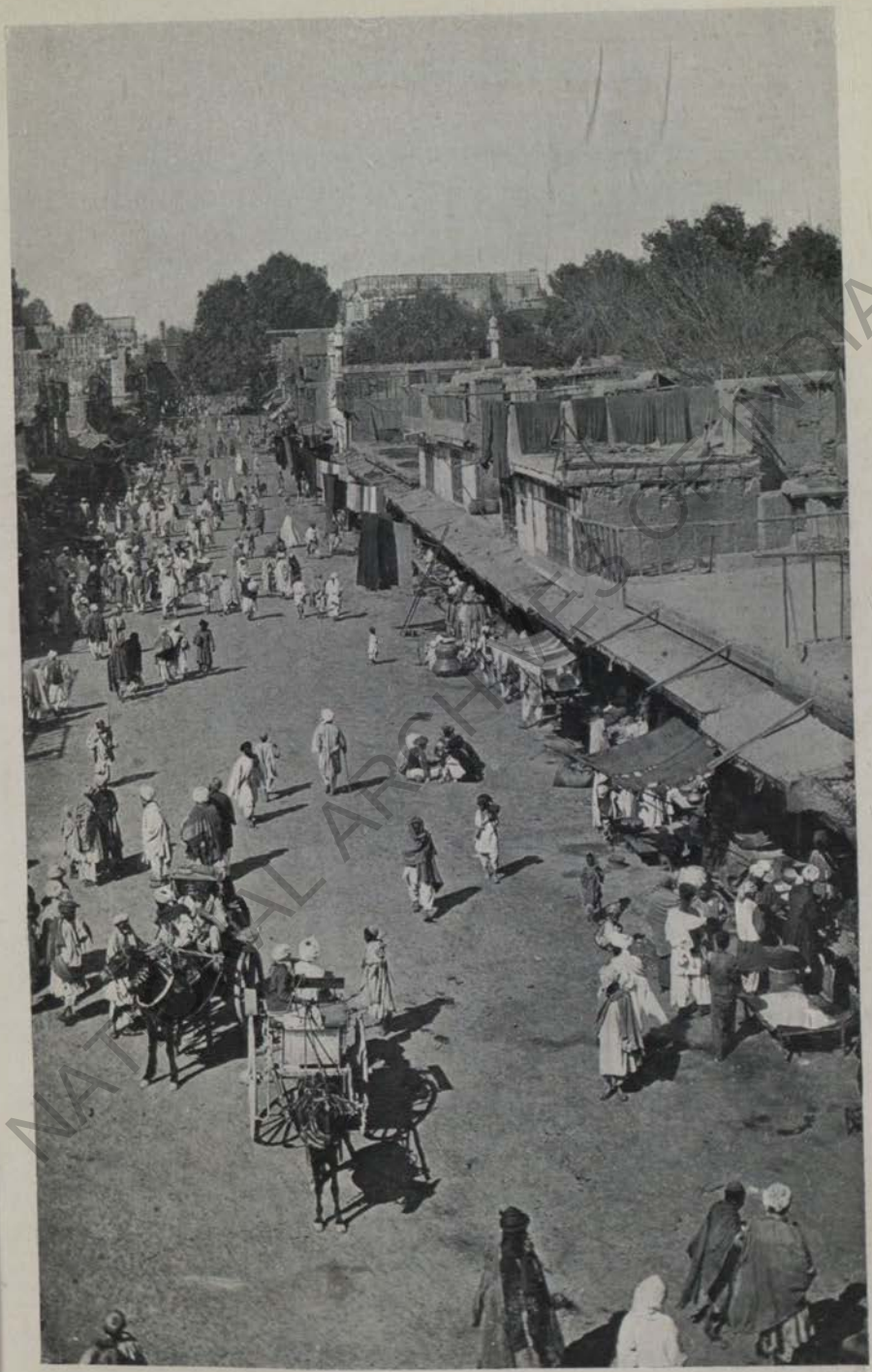
The mission, I am informed, is to the Afghans, who believe themselves to be the lost tribes of Israel. People in this part of the world will believe anything provided it is sufficiently improbable. But the missionaries, who for servants of the spirit exhibit wonderful *savoir faire*, have turned this harmless belief to good account. Inside the church I see a tablet dedicated to the memory of one Rev. Isidore Lowenthal—as his name indicates, a Christian apostle of Semitic antecedents. The Old Resident confirms my philological deduction. He also tells me that this Christian Jewish messenger to the lost tribes of his race was shot by his watchman in 1864, adding that his original epitaph ran as follows:

'To the memory of Isidore Lowenthal. He was shot by his watchman. Well done, thou good and faithful servant.'

Just opposite this mosque-church I see a real Mahomedan shrine. A blind preacher is sitting in the cloister, with a dozen pious beards in front of him. He chants a hymn, swaying forwards and backwards, and the dozen beards sway in chorus. And the muezzin's voice comes from a neighbouring minaret proclaiming to the four quarters of the globe that, though there be many prophets, there is but one God.

In the East the step from theology to politics is short. I therefore make no apology—not even that feeble apology for an apology conveyed by what printers call a 'white line.' Peshawar is the capital of the newly-created and much-discussed North-West Frontier Province—a region interesting in a variety of ways, divorced from the Punjab by Lord Curzon. The late Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab regarded the separation with strong disapproval. He thought that, owing partly to the difficulty of recruiting and maintaining a service on so small a scale as that required for the new jurisdiction, and partly to the pre-

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STREET IN PESHAWAR.

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ponderating attention which the head of the province is obliged to give to the political department, the internal administration of the district would suffer. In short, he pronounced the divorce the most brilliant blunder of the past decade.

I am not in a position to express an opinion as to how far His Honour's pessimistic predictions have been fulfilled. Yet it is patent to anyone that the province, whether for the reasons mentioned or through its geographical situation, or on both accounts, is anything but a paradise of order.

Here are a few samples of the *Pax Britannica* as it is understood in this part of the British Empire.

For some time past the residents of Matni, a village on the Kohat road, fourteen miles distant from Peshawar, have been having a bad time at the hands of dacoits. The brigands consist of Afridis and fugitives from British territory, and go about armed with rifles and swords. Towards the end of last month seven men from Matni had occasion to go into the adjoining foreign territory. They were armed, but this did not save them from being attacked by a gang of Afridi freebooters. The brigands killed one man and carried away three rifles and a number of cartridges. On hearing of the occurrence, the Thanadar at the village in question set out in pursuit of the dacoits in company with several armed men. A band of the Border Military Police also started out on the same quest, but the culprits are still 'wanted.' Only the other night a party of some fifty tribesmen made a determined attack upon one of the outposts of Fort Lockhart, on the Samana range to the west of Kohat. The post was strongly held by a guard of the Punjabi regiment in garrison upon the ridge, and the raiders were driven off after five hours' firing. Four of the defenders, however, were wounded.

But even in the city itself there is no lack of local colour. An officer has just been telling me that only last night, having received information of a gang of brigands intending to hold their rendezvous in a neighbouring garden,

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he went to the place with a force of sixty to waylay the gentlemen. They, however, apparently as well informed of the movements of the authorities as the latter are of theirs, failed to keep the appointment.

Such little affairs with Pathan brigands are too trivial and too common even to supply a decent topic of conversation, and my friend immediately plunged into the more interesting subject of hounds. Nor could I blame him for his frivolity. He is too familiar with the Pathan people and their ways. The Pathan generally regards the revenue demand as an inconvenient obligation, to be evaded as long as possible. In this, however, he is not singular. Nor, considering the social conditions of his country, is it to be wondered at that he entertains a lofty contempt for any system of economic cultivation. Like most primitive peasants, he prefers to rely as much as possible on Providence—a beautiful resignation to the divine will which possesses the advantage of rendering exertion superfluous. But the ways of Providence are proverbially inscrutable, and when the natural supply of water fails the pious Pathan finds himself in an awkward position. Thus last year, even in the trans-border tracts, where cultivation is dependent less on the actual rainfall and more on the springs and snow-fed hill-streams, a diminution of the volume of the latter has had an immediate and fatal effect on the peasant's life, so much so that it has compelled the importation of grain from the settled districts. Where agriculture languishes brigandage must flourish.

At this moment Peshawar is full of Pathan beards from all parts of Afghanistan, anxious to work on the railway line by day and, perchance, in another way by night. For to all his other virtues the Pathan adds a keen scent for profit. Even the far-away Ghazni and Kandahar have sent legions of gold-braided contractors, eager with their offers of coolies. They look peaceful enough, for my genial military friend tells me, with a wink, that the police have taken good care to lock up all persons suspected of excessive vivacity: 'We cannot afford to run any risks now the

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Prince is here.' For the same reason the streets are lined by the Black Watch, the Gordon Highlanders, and native troops. Ah, Peshawar is a place brimming with vitality.

Another rich fountain of disorder in the province is the chronic unrest which prevails across the border. Lawlessness is infectious. When a tribe is in an unsatisfactory state, or a gang of outlaws is committing depredations in British territory, not only do the raids by these help to swell the list of crime, but in many cases advantage is taken by local bad characters to commit outrages, in the hope, very often fulfilled, that their offences will be credited to the offending tribesmen or to the outlaws. However, in dealing with the prevalence of crime in India it is never quite safe to go entirely by official statistics. One must bear constantly in mind another feature of the people's character. A large proportion of complaints is always either false or frivolous. Nor, it must be added, does conviction invariably prove guilt. The authorities are, of course, doing their utmost to mete out justice and nothing but justice; but even their vigilance cannot always cope successfully with the malice and mendacity of interested parties.

Nor is the number of prisoners an infallible criterion of indigenous criminality. Thus the overcrowding in some of the gaols here is largely due to punitive measures. The pressure brought to bear on the tribes results in the surrender of a large number of outlaws and persons accused of various breaches of the Ten Commandments. These punitive expeditions generally have a salutary, if temporary, effect. Last March, for example, the raid made by Major Roos-Keppel, Political Officer in the Khyber, upon the village of Kaddam, near Jamrud, impressed the outlaws who haunt the strip of 'no-man's-land' on the Peshawar border. This was the first time for many years that a surprise had been sprung upon the villages beyond the administrative frontier, and the success which attended it alarmed the lawless bands that deemed themselves safe from molestation. Attacks upon villages

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or police posts in British territory suddenly ceased. The Afridis also evinced an inclination to surrender men who were 'wanted' for murder or theft; and, where the offender escaped into Afghanistan, he was warned not to return by the simple expedient of burning his house to the ground.

Rough-and-ready measures are still the order of the day in the Borderland, but they are understood by the tribesmen, and this is their best justification. But the wholesome effect is only momentary. The peril of raids from across the frontier only disappears at the approach of winter. The snows succeed where the police has failed. In November the Afridis, the most interesting and most distressing member of the turbulent frontier family, begin to bring their flocks and herds down to winter in the grazing-grounds. Even the most discontented sections will not run risks at this time of the year, knowing that the lower valleys will be open to counter-attack.

More serious sources of trouble are the mutual jealousies of the tribes and puny Native States along the frontier. But here also the political situation is largely a matter of temperature. The winter of 1904 was one of the severest throughout Upper and Central India. In the United Provinces, Central Provinces, the Punjab, Rajputana, and Bombay Presidency, the frost destroyed the crops of *arhar*, in some districts partially, in others entirely. The tobacco crop, the opium crop, the cotton crop, and all standing crops, suffered severely. The only people who profited were the tribes in the hinterland beyond the administrative border in Northern India. Waziristan and Kurram were frost-bound; Tirah was covered by 6 feet of snow. The tribesmen's fighting ardour was quelled beneath the cold sheet of snow and frost, and Nature brought a truce to the interminable clan feuds. Shiah and Sunni, in the Orakzai and Afridi districts, for once were bound to keep the peace, while in Bajor hostilities between Nawagai and Dir ceased. The tribes looked forward to a plentiful harvest, for the deep snow in the spring thaws

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into plentiful water. God is good and impartial. And both the snows and the promises of good crops came opportunely.

But the cold is transient, whereas the passions of the frontier clans are permanent. Internally each tribe is governed on extremely democratic principles. There always is a party in power and a party in opposition. The latter, in the more primitive districts, when defeated, have to go into exile. There they intrigue, and, when sufficiently strong, invade their country and turn the Government out. Among the more advanced tribes there is no bloodshed attending the change of Government. The contest is sensibly decided by the mere exhibition of the rival forces, and the defeated party does not leave the country, but simply regards itself as being in exile, until it manages to regain the confidence of the majority. In many of these tribes, I am assured by those who know, the gray-beards gathered in parliament could, by their decorum and eloquence, give many lessons to our House of Commons politicians. The ideal man among them is, just as he was among the Homeric Greeks, one who excels as *rerum actor et orator verborum*—by his valour in the field and eloquence in council. But the warfare between tribe and tribe knows no decency.

Nor is decency a prominent characteristic of the feuds between the frontier kinglets. One of them was a short time ago troubled with doubts as to the succession. He therefore invited all the possible claimants to a banquet and, leaving them on some pretext or other, set fire to the room. All the guests were burnt to death, and thus the question was solved satisfactorily. This believer in thoroughness is at the present moment here salaaming to the Prince. He is one of many statesmen of the same school.

I saw a number of them the other day in the Fort, where they had assembled to pay homage to the Prince. They were all duly turbaned, bearded, and baggy-breeched; some stood in patent boots, others in gold-broidered slippers with long points turned saucily upwards, and

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others candidly bare-footed. Among them I noted with peculiar interest the Nawab of Dir, the Mehter of Chitral, and the Khan of Nawagai—a triad of mutual abhorrence who appear to have agreed to differ for the moment. The Nawab of Dir deserves special mention, both for his own sake and also because his kingdom has recently achieved a great eminence in turpitude. He is a young man—deaf and almost dumb. But, as the Old Resident prettily remarked to me, 'it does not really matter, for he is sure to be murdered in a couple of months or so.'

'Murdered!' said I, casting a look of increased curiosity at His Highness; 'by whom?'

'His younger brother. According to the custom of the country, the boys are not brought up by their own parents, but are sent out to foster-fathers. The foster-father entrusted with the education of the younger prince has brought him up carefully to thirst for his brother's blood and throne.'

In brief the story is as follows: The old Nawab of Dir, after a long and not uneventful career, died last year—strangely enough, from natural causes. He was a great friend of ours, and gave valuable assistance to Sir Robert Low's expedition when it forced its way over the Malakand Pass to relieve Chitral in 1895. He again proved his stanchness in the dark days of 1897, when the Mullah, whom we were pleased to consider mad as long as his reasoning differed from ours, raised the whole of the inhabitants of the Swat Valley to attack the British, and when the Malakand camp and the little Chakdarra fort were, as everybody remembers—or, rather, does not—closely besieged for the better part of a week. He was rewarded for these services with lands and titles; and the kingdom of Dir to-day is a very different place from the little khanate which was all that had escaped the greedy claws of Sher Afzal and the Mehter of Chitral in 1895, the difference consisting chiefly in increased size.

The old Nawab's death, though, as I have ventured to assert, quite natural, was well-timed. Had it occurred a

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few weeks earlier, when his two sons were fighting over the claim to succeed him, and the State's hereditary enemy, the Khan of Nawagai, was raiding on the border, things might have gone badly with the little kingdom. As it was, the younger son was in exile, the Khan of Nawagai had been repulsed, and the eldest son remained in possession, in accordance, it is said, with the wishes of the old Nawab. The Government of India gladly acquiesced in the arrangement, hoping that the new Nawab may follow in the friendly footsteps of his father. It is very important that he should do so, for the direct road from India to Chitral runs, for the greater portion of its length, through Dir territory. But he is a man of many infirmities, and, what with the newness of his accession, his extensive imbecility, and his brother, he does not appear to promise either a long life to himself or lasting peace to us. Besides, there are the Mehter of Chitral and the Khan of Nawagai to be reckoned with, and they both are known to be inspired by the most lively jealousy of the Nawab of Dir.

The Khan of Nawagai especially is a person whose moods from day to day it is as hazardous to forecast as are those of the weather, and his activity is as far-reaching and elusive. Not long ago he was warned by the political authorities that he must abstain from mischief in Bajor. To compensate himself for this limitation of freedom, he attacked forts in Jandoul belonging to the Nawab of Dir, and there was much intertribal fighting, that caused unrest throughout the country west of the Chakdarra-Chitral Road. What makes things more precarious still, the Jandoulis themselves have little affection for either suitor to their allegiance, and they would certainly welcome back their old chief, Umra Khan, could he escape from Kabul. They were forced to accept absorption into the Dir State in 1895, but they have never been contented with their new lot, and it is supposed that the Khan of Nawagai has some secret adherents among them. Hence his success in his last adventure, when he all but

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managed to invade poor distracted Dir, whose imbecile Nawab endures our moral support. Merely moral, for at present it is not the Indian Government's wish to embark on adventures.

In October, 1904, the regular troops beyond the administrative border were withdrawn, and the responsibility of keeping the peace was left to the militia, who have hitherto proved equal to the task. The Old Resident, however, warns me that 'it is never safe to make predictions as to the behaviour of this or that lawless tribe, and more particularly of the clans which inhabit Waziristan; but the principle that has been adopted is sound enough in itself, and it is now being given a fair trial. From the military point of view the concentration of strength is admirable; it remains to be seen whether political control can be maintained with only militia immediately at hand to check disorder and prevent raiding parties from adventuring into our settled districts on the Borderland.'

Meanwhile, when the relief of the garrisons takes place at the beginning of winter, no little anxiety is felt whether they will ever reach their destination. Thus, last month it was announced, as an unexpectedly lucky accident, that the Chitral relieving troops reached Drosh Fort all well, and the British garrison, which had held that distant post during the preceding twelvemonth, started safely on its return to India. No danger was experienced on its homeward march, as Dir is for the moment quiet, and the turbulent Swat tribesmen were too busy with their crops to seek other kind of harvest.

Of course, things will improve when the system of strategic railways has attained a higher development. But this development has been uncommonly slow since the completion of the broad-gauge line to New Chaman in the direction of Kandahar. Lord Curzon, in his 'Russia in Central Asia,' published in 1889, wrote: 'It was proposed after the second Afghan War to continue the rails from Peshawar up the Khyber Pass to Landi

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Kotal. This project has since been abandoned, and a limited extension, only ten miles in length, within British territory from Peshawar to Jamrud at the mouth of the pass, has been authorized.' The short line to Jamrud, authorized before 1889, was not opened for traffic until 1901, while the Shilman extension was only begun the other day. But, according to those who approve of this policy, better late than never. The new railway will, in the opinion of experts, be of the highest strategic importance. The Old Resident even hopes that the Amir of Afghanistan may be induced to permit of an extension of the line through his territory. At present, however, he, like his father, displays towards roads and railways an antipathy which may, for all I know to the contrary, be as wholesome as any other instinctive aversion.

Meanwhile the Shilman line progresses satisfactorily. The Afridis have so far expressed no objection, and their headmen appear disposed not to interfere with an enterprise which does not concern them directly. It would have been different if the line had been projected up the Khyber Pass straight to Landi Kotal. As it is, I heard the evening before our visit to the pass that an enterprising Afridi had, during the previous night, built a wall across the pass as a protest against the Prince's visit. This story, however, did not deter those charged with the organization of the expedition to the defile which, according to certain prophets, is to be the gate of the ever-predicted and ever-deferred invasion of India.

We left Peshawar Station at 8.30 in the morning, a royal train plus a carriageful of Press correspondents. Soon we left behind the proud British cantonments, with their solid houses, well-trimmed lawns, and rose-trees, and the crumpling mud walls of the native town. Nor did we regret either. The sun just glided over the blue mountains, suffusing the clouds with silver. The dome of a temple loomed dull and dark against the gray heavens from amidst the woods, every twig of which stood out distinct in the clear winter air. Below, the valley spread

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its carpet of green and gold, and on the white road numbers of black buffaloes could be seen sweeping the dust with their loads of long sugar-cane, led by peasants in gray blankets and coarse white cloaks, shivering townwards.

But even these signs of semi-civilization rapidly disappeared. As we went on, the walls of the valley drew closer and closer to each other: that on the east a solemn procession of sunlit peaks and shady ravines; the western ridge a jagged mass of rock dimly seen through the dazzling sun and the dust. The plain between suddenly changed into a desert strewn with stones, like the dried-up bed of a broad river long dead, and dotted here and there by a gipsy-like encampment of Afghan or Afridi men, women, children, buffaloes, dogs, donkeys, and dirt.

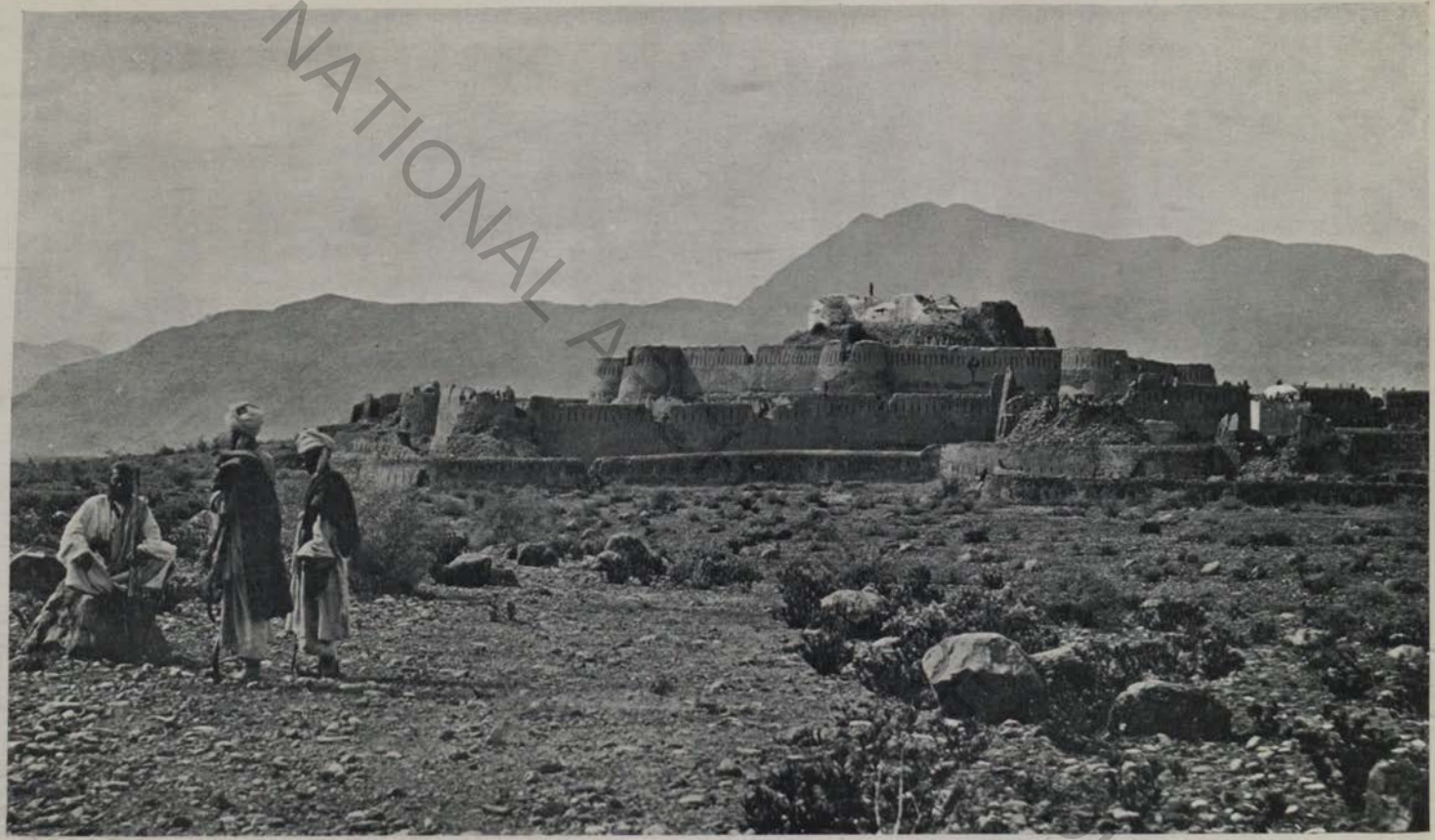
In three-quarters of an hour we covered the ten miles which separate Peshawar from Jamrud, and alighted close to the fort, an oblong brown pile spreading on the plain at the foot of the bare hills. As one of my colleagues aptly remarked, it looks like a battleship—a battleship stranded in the desert, its masts gone, and its towers and funnels turned into stone.

At the station was drawn up an escort of the stalwart Khyber Rifle horsemen, and, Their Royal Highnesses having stepped into their carriage, the rest of the party accommodated themselves into some thirty tongas drawn by loosely-harnessed transport ponies.

Thus we entered the pass, and tore along the military road which winds through it, in and out, up and down, between the spurs of the rocks often converging to within a few yards of each other. It was a progress through a perfect wilderness of dead mountains studded with scrub, the nearer hills brown, the overtopping crests purple, all resting against a sky of translucent blue. The clatter of our tongas was the only noise to be heard, the mountains looking down upon us stolidly, as though they had long forgotten the sounds of humanity.

Suddenly we heard the roar of water rushing out of the

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FORT JAMRUD.

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rocks, and a turn of the road revealed a dip of pale green grass and a tent upon it. It was Ali Masjid, where we changed ponies.

A few months later the procession resumed its jolting career over the mountains, the drawn swords of the escort glinting in the sun up above, the tail of tongas behind defiling through clouds of Afridi dust.

Everything became more interesting henceforward; we drove close past many an Afridi village, a square, loop-holed enclosure of mud, with a mud tower rising from one corner, not unlike in shape to an English windmill. On the slope beneath some of these villages yawned the smoke-begrimed mouths of the caves in which dwell those of the inhabitants who overflow the fortified enclosure. Under the walls of each village spreads a thirst-stricken field, in which the wretched villagers grow their food, and the cemetery in which they are buried. From amidst the heaps of loose stones and the slanting headstones of the rude graves rises the more pretentious tomb of a saint, bristling with red and white flags suspended from long reeds.

The villages are just now at peace with one another, or, to be more precise, they have graciously concluded a forty-eight hours' truce for the sake of the Prince and the Princess. But, the Old Resident informs me, normally the men spend their days sitting behind the loopholes of these primitive walls, while their wives dig in the stony fields beneath. At the present moment there are in the hospital at Peshawar three of the inhabitants laid up with the effects of a recent feud. But we are safe, for every village on either side of our path is commanded by British block-houses, and every hill-top is guarded by the Khyber Rifles.

These things render our persons sacred. Besides, all these interesting rascals are subsidized by the British Government on condition that, in the transaction of their blood-feuds, they respect the road, which thus forms neutral and inviolable territory. A short time ago the situation was explained to the headmen in the follow-

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ing terms: 'On this road you shall not shoot each other, but fifty yards on either side you may shoot.' The headmen undertook to see that these limitations to their enterprising activity were duly observed, and they were—with one solitary omission. A certain Afridi forgot himself and killed his enemy on the British road. Thereupon the British authorities fined the village to which the man belonged £100—that is, deducted that amount from the subsidy. And the village acquiesced, recognising that the man had violated the agreement. There is a sense of honesty even among these Afridi murderers.

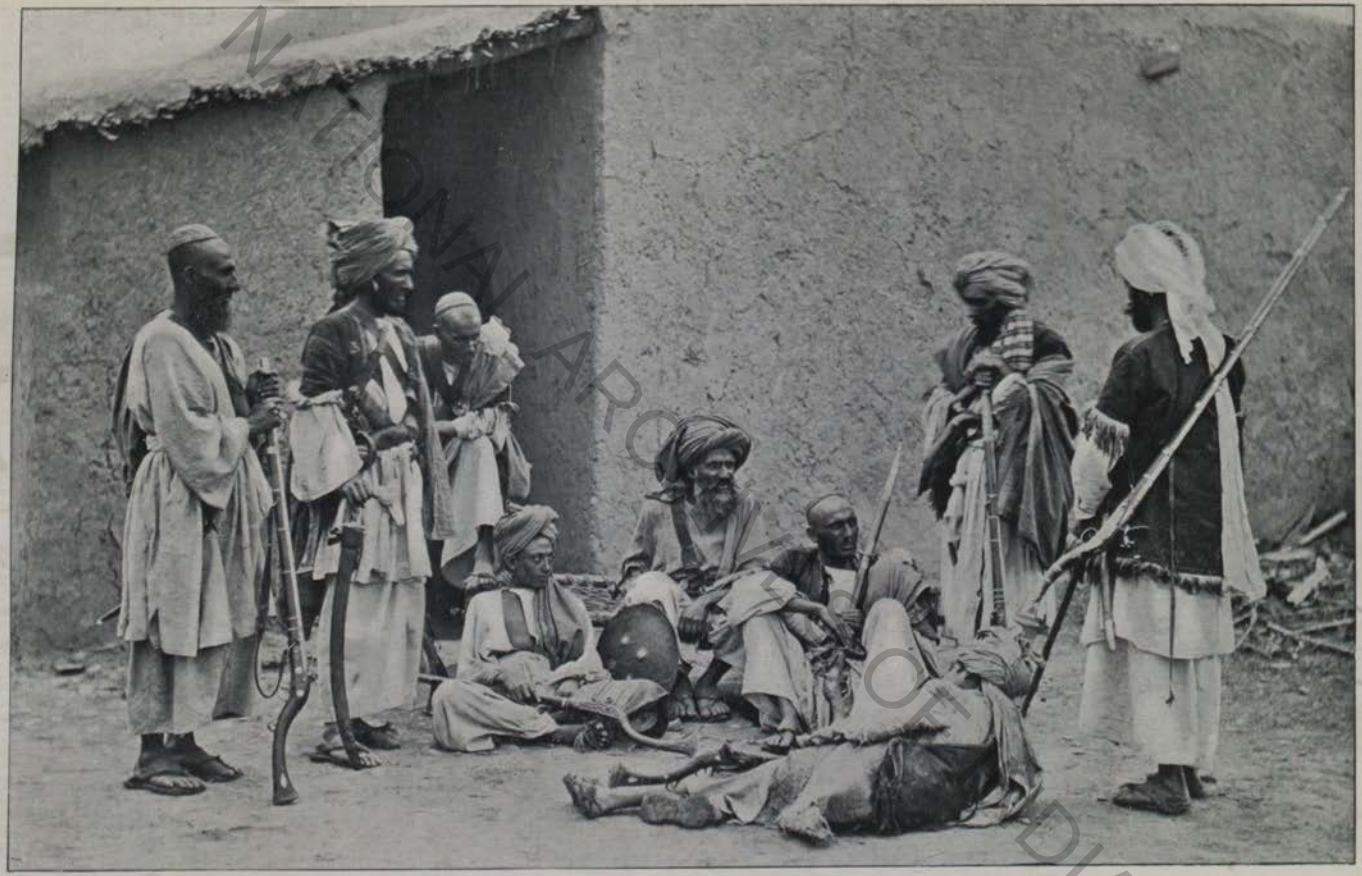
At noon we emerged from the narrow pass into the round level ground of Landi Kotal—our destination. It is a high valley set in a ring of sombre rocks. In the middle stands the fort, an unpicturesque but highly efficient looking square enclosure of solid masonry, carefully loopholed and within divided into many narrow courts, the partitions as strong and as carefully loopholed as the outer walls. At the entrance was drawn up another guard, and behind it crouched a crowd of Afridis in their rags, disappointingly, I might almost say depressingly, quiet. It is a tribe of men that looks at its best when at its worst.

Perhaps the escort and the block-houses on the surrounding heights had something to do with this distressing quietude.

After lunch at Landi Kotal we returned to Ali Masjid, where Their Royal Highnesses alighted at the *shamiana* and received the homage of about a dozen maliks or tribal chieftains, clad in sheepskins, each of whom had come with tributes of hospitality, consisting of a pot of honey and a big Afghan sheep.

We reached Jamrud again a little after 4.30, completely clothed and stuffed with Afghan dust, an experience which compels me to withdraw the palm from the Punjab. Thence we resumed our seats in the train, reaching Peshawar soon after five. It was not without gratitude that I re-entered my tent, but I did not recognise my everyday self until after a most comprehensive ablution.

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TRIBESMEN OF THE KHYBER PASS.

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CHAPTER IX

IN LORD KITCHENER'S CAMPS

It is morning, and the train creeps distressingly across a vast plain broken at every step by those sudden, steep, sultry watercourses—called *nullahs*—which give to this part of the earth the look of a carcass in an advanced stage of decomposition. On one side stretches a range of blue hills above whose shoulders sparkle the snows of the Himalayas; on the other, far away along the sky-line, marches a great caravan of camels, looming through the haze supernaturally large and vague, like a procession seen in a dream. They march rhythmically on, hundreds and hundreds of lofty humps, long necks, and uncouth heads swaying in silent chorus, with their legs lost amid the rolling waves of dust. They are, like ourselves, bound for Lord Kitchener's camp at Kala Sarai, where the Commander-in-Chief is holding his great military Saturnalia.

Delhi, the proposed scene of the manœuvres, had to be abandoned for the same melancholy reason for which was abandoned the visit to Ajmer. Fodder is this year so scarce in the drought-stricken district of Delhi that the sheep subsist on the leaves of the trees, and the standing crops, raised for the benefit of man, are now used as food for the cattle. The Old Resident tells me that it is not want of grain that constitutes a modern Indian famine so much as the want of fodder. 'Grain,' he says, 'thanks to the railways, is now easily poured into a famishing district; but there is no means of fighting the scarcity of fodder, except by turning the cattle into

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the cornfields.' It is a strange form of economy, or would be in any other part of the globe; in India, however, nothing is strange except the normal.

We reached the camp at Kala Sarai on December 5, and for two days there was nothing but charge and counter-charge—55,000 troops in khaki of all arms and complexions being engaged in the mock campaign —much rattle of musketry, rumble of wheels, and roar of cannon. And of an evening, when the hurly-burly was over and the battle lost and won, the plain was covered for miles and miles around with masses of men and horses moving to their bivouacs like phantom armies, through a mist of dull yellow earth which wiped the purple mountains out of sight. When the clouds had subsided, it was possible to see in the distance a string of camels stepping slowly across the great red face of the setting sun.

The general idea of the campaign was that a hostile army invaded the country from the north-west by crossing the Indus, while the mobilization of the defending forces was still incomplete. A concentration was in progress at Rawalpindi—an important arsenal—but inferior in strength to the enemy already in the field, while large reinforcements which were ultimately to be available from Jhelum and Lahore could not arrive for some days. The object of the enemy, naturally, was to capture Rawalpindi before the arrival of these reinforcements. Both invaders and defenders struggled gallantly day and night to possess themselves of the Margalla Passes, and finally the world was interested to hear that the southern army had succeeded in being driven in, and that India was conquered. Nothing else was possible. The ultimate object was to concentrate all the forces, northern as well as southern, at Rawalpindi for the Review, and Rawalpindi happens to lie to the south of the Margalla Ridge.

The play over, we proceeded to the State Camp at Rawalpindi, where we witnessed the Review held in

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honour of the Prince and Princess. The contending forces had poured into the adjacent countryside, and, now knit in disciplined amity, marched and galloped and rumbled past their Royal Highnesses, wave after wave of bright colour and glinting steel, led by Lord Kitchener. There were among them infantry, cavalry, and artillery, Hussars and Lancers, Sikhs and Dogras, Punjabis and Pathans, Baluchis and Madrassis, Rajputs and Gurkhas, Englishmen and Irishmen, likewise Seaforth Highlanders and Gordon Highlanders in their kilts and khaki helmets, and, in one word, all the peacock gaiety of Mars in time of peace. Between two regiments of Lancers might also be seen, marching past the Prince, a stray mule: he marched with all the gravity of one long accustomed to the glories of war. I wonder what he thought of the pageant. My own knowledge of matters military is such as becomes a respectable civilian. Yet this grand display of India's fighting machine—or rather of the Northern Command, the flower of the Indian Army—did not fail to impress me, though only in a lukewarm and academic kind of way. The cavalry gallop past especially proved, as my platitudinarian friend expressed it, with his usual originality, 'one of the most striking spectacles witnessed by Their Royal Highnesses during the whole tour.'

Personally, I was even more deeply impressed by the kindness and courtesy of Lord Kitchener's officers who entertained us. It befell me while still in the manœuvre camp to catch a nasty cold, accompanied by ills not easily described, and their solicitude for my welfare could only be compared to that of a sympathetic woman or of a hen looking after an errant chicken. As I lay awake on my pallet, bleak and forlorn under a mountain of blankets and waterproofs in one of the Commander-in-Chief's Spartan tents, I almost became a convert to the science of murder, which people try to disguise under so many a euphemism and brilliant uniform. To me it is one of the queerest enigmas in life that soldiers and sailors—the men who are taught to glory in the most inhuman of

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occupations—should, as a rule, surpass all their fellow-creatures in humanity. I tried to picture to myself Colonel X, Major Y, Captain *Z*, and all the rest of these good fellows, as politicians, University dons, undertakers, or journalists. It was ridiculous, almost tragic.

To return to the State Camp. It is a great quadrangle of spacious tents, separated by patches of consumptive-looking verdure which on closer inspection turns out to be mustard and cress. Close by the camp spread the military cantonments, grown in importance since the last Afghan War, and now harbouring a formidable number of British and native troops, besides being the headquarters of the Northern Command. I have observed in this remote corner of the Empire a curious tendency to sift the European as well as the native soldiers according to nationalities. The separation is said to increase the spirit of emulation between the English, Irish, and Scotch regiments. On the other hand, the Old Resident, who here happens to be an unmistakable Irish veteran, assures me that two Irish regiments hate each other even more whole-heartedly than either of them detests the Scotch. The mutual attitude of these three components of the nation, which some sardonic humorist has designated Anglo-Saxon, is, I think, pretty lucidly summed up in the common saying: 'The Irish have won India, the English administer it, and the Scotch exploit it.'

Beyond the cantonments spreads the triangular city of Rawalpindi, with its back against the Murree Hills—an offshoot of the Himalayas, bristling with wild wood and teeming with wolves, leopards, hyenas, jackals, and all the other interesting inhabitants of an Indian jungle. The city is of yesterday, but the soil on which it stands now and again yields Greek and other old coins and bricks which mark the site on which once flourished the capital of the Bhatti tribe, humbled to the dust during one of the Moghul raids of the fourteenth century. Some remnants of this tribe of the past and of other obscure

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races survive in the maze of dark lanes which constitute the oldest part of the city. As for the modern part, to say that it is a Punjabi town is to say that among its 50,000 inhabitants it includes the usual salad of creeds—Mahomedans, Hindus, Sikhs, and missionaries.

Between this city and the cantonments endeavours to flow the little river Leh, on whose banks blooms, to the best of its ability, the Park. Its lily ponds are now wreathed by tall pampas grass; but later on, the Old Resident affirms, they will be covered by numerous wild-duck, floating on the still, sleepy waters with perfect impunity, for shooting in the Park is mercifully prohibited. I strove to imagine this parochial paradise thronged by the inhabitants of the cantonments. I pictured them to myself, ladies and gentlemen, all blinded by the sun and dust of the day, deafened by the blare of bugle and the beat of drum, by the clatter of hoofs, the tramp of martial boots, the rumble of heavy artillery wheels and the rattle and thunder of guns, anxiously waiting for the setting of the sun, and then repairing hither to breathe the cool air of the evening and to bless the municipal worthies who planted this Elysian grove for them. I even ventured to imagine myself in the ranks of the blessed, cheroot in mouth, hands in trouser pockets, ruminating over the events of the day and revolving mighty descriptive phrases, inspired thereto by the fragrance of flower and shrub and the gentle murmur of green leaves. As a matter of fact—oh, that terrible matter of fact!—the trees and the shrubs weep, shrivelled with thirst, and the cruelty of the after-dark cold can only be pardoned because it promises to kill at last the municipal mosquitoes which have so gallantly defied all the efforts of the mosquito brigade.

On the whole, I was not sorry to see the last of Lord Kitchener's mustard and cress and camels.

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CHAPTER X

AT THE HIMALAYAS

EARLY on the morning of December 9 our train drew up at the station of Satwari, which delighted me, for I was under the impression that we were going to Jammu, and I love a surprise. Nor is there, to my taste, any more delicious variety of that emotion—so rare in these sad, *nil admirari* days—than that of suddenly finding one's self in a place other than that indicated by one's ticket. However, my delight was nipped in the bud by the discovery that Satwari is to Jammu only what Paddington is to London. Facing north, I can see the gilt pinnacles of the capital gleaming over the curves of the hills which crawl at the hem of the Himalayas. And from behind the town tower the broad, snow-crowned heads of the mighty giants themselves, resting calmly against the bosom of the Kashmir sky, so soft, so clear, so gratefully unlike the dusty heavens which I have just left behind me; and the face of the plain which spreads its green skirt southward is full of a tranquil smile, inexpressibly sweet after the turmoil of the Rawalpindi camps.

Across this plain meanders the river Tavi, washing the feet of the capital of this twin State, so immense in size, so scanty in population. It meanders timidly and thinly between large stretches of white, round boulders which, when the snows melt in the mountains, are hidden deep beneath volumes of turbid water; but at this moment they turn their bleached brows up to the walls of the fort which frowns down upon them on one side and upon the town on the other, threatening what it cannot protect;

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for in time of peril this fort will be at the mercy of the man who holds the overtopping heights. But, *dis gratia*, we live in times of peace, free to wander over the slopes, breathing the air of the Himalayas, prying into the ruins of the past—mute witnesses to glories that are dead—and holding converse with the present.

In 1586 the great Moghul Emperor Akbar conquered Kashmir; in 1752 the Afghans devastated it. Then the Rajput rulers of Jammu extended their sway over yon plain. But their pride was humbled by the Sikhs of the Punjab in 1819, and Jammu was swallowed up in the dominions of Ranjit Singh till the Sikh War of 1845. These are only a few episodes in a drama which begins in the mists of the pre-Buddhist period, gropes its way through the labyrinth of events, or myths, which constitute the Buddhist triumph and discomfiture, the restoration of Hinduism, the ascendancy of Islam, the rise and fall of the Sikh power, ending, as every other act of the Indian drama ends, in the establishment of British rule. It is a tragedy sufficiently remote to please, so I forgive the gods for having robbed me of my surprise.

And the land seems created to supply a fitting setting for the phantom scenes of my imagination. Grandeur and grace, the majestic and the mildly beautiful, never were combined with happier audacity. Hitherto I had been inclined to think that mountains, like fools, are pretty much alike all over the world; that there is little variety or individuality in these inarticulate monsters of stone which stretch their myriad limbs over the earth. But the sight of the Himalayas has saved me from this terrible heresy. Yes, they are wonderful, though tourists do praise them. To me such praise savours of impertinence, and I will try to spare the reader those ornamental adjectives which convey nothing, except, perhaps, a faint notion of the speaker's inanity.

The impression wrought by these silent Titans upon me is that of immense power, aloofness, and dignity. I can no better express my meaning than by describing

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them as divine. In so doing I am supported by the authority of one greater than any writer that ever wrote. The native peasant mind, more primitive—that is, saner—than the tourist substitute for mind, does not praise these mountains, nor does it patronize their Maker: it worships them reverently and silently, deeply conscious of their greatness and of its own littleness. With the true perception of a sincere worshipper, the Kashmir peasant discerns in this assembly of the eternal what must always escape the profane vulgar. Each lofty peak is consecrated by a special legend, and there is no rock without its name. And, when gathered together round their evening fires, the long-haired hill-folk tell many a long tale which tediously and satisfactorily accounts for the shape and the mood of every hill, personified. I say hill, for in India no one ever speaks of mountains. To the hoary inhabitant of this hoary land a Briarean height of 24,000 feet is a hill, even as a man of seventy is a boy to his father of ninety. One of these 'hills'—the immeasurable Pir—owes its name to a *pir*, or holy hermit, who in the days of old blessed the northward-bound pilgrim, and whose benevolent spirit still presides over its ancient haunts, hallowing the whole range with its presence.

But Jammu itself knows little of the divine or of the majestic. It climbs up the wooded hillsides, the very walls of its fort shorn of battlements, and the candle-extinguisher domes of its temples utterly devoid of point. It is true, they end in a gilt pinnacle, but it is not sharp, and in some cases the builder has proceeded to prove his imbecility by adorning the sides of the dome with similar pinnacles. As you enter the city, you are oppressed at every step by the same characteristic: the shops and dwellings crawl up the slope, slow, low, and level-roofed, as though crushed into flatness by the weight of the overlooking mountains.

Here the influence of physical environment over the works of man can be discerned chiefly in its absence.

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The very palace of the Maharaja—what of the old building has escaped the hands of the modern architect—is a huge caravanserai, its square courtyard surrounded by one story of small balconies squinting at the heavy cloisters below, which squat along the four sides—unswept, unwashed, and swarming with attendants to match. The same traits depress your soul and offend your nose everywhere. The shops which line the main street up to the Maharaja's palace might be cowsheds, but for their superior filth, and the majority of the private dwellings are mere mud-hovels, their walls adorned with dung-cakes. Squalor scowls on both sides, deepened by the feeble experiments in whitewash, imperfectly carried out, in anticipation of the royal visit, and the people are walking and shouting embodiments of their detestable environment.

I have seldom seen a more loathsome set of turbaned men and breeched women. They stare at me out of eyes full of impudence and greed, and the little girls are begging shamelessly for *bakshish*. I am unable to discover in this crowd one face that I could trust for two minutes with my purse, or even with my life. And yet the people of Jammu are not civilized. Their rascality owes nothing to Western culture. It is thoroughly indigenous and spontaneous. An exception is offered by the donkeys. These are as harmless and human as the donkeys one meets at home.

The finger-mark of Europe can, however, be seen here and there, faint and superficial, yet unmistakably fatuous. In obedience to orders from above, many a wooden *chaja*, or cornice, which had long forgotten, if it ever knew, the caress of the brush, is now disguised in painted loyalty, while the picturesque and shabby sunshades, which normally fulfil the double purpose of excluding the light and concealing the extortions of the shopkeepers, have been removed as improper. In their stead float flags and bunting of unimpeachable banality, and the walls are covered with 'welcome placards.' It all reminds me, somehow, of the Prime Minister of another

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Native State who, after having pompously stumbled through an English address of welcome to His Royal Highness, asked me what I thought of its 'phraseology of sentiment.' Being a courteous man at heart, I evaded the question.

Yet there is one feature even in this picture of conventional unloveliness which has moved me to a smile of simple pleasure. All the *vidyarthies*, or religious students, clad in their native rainbows, were assembled on the gate-roof of the many-domed Rugnath temple, and, as the royal guests drove past on their way to the Palace, burst forth into many a Sanskrit hymn, incomprehensible and, consequently, deeply interesting. A little further on, the boys of the modern High School stood by the roadside, each class distinguished by a specially-coloured turban, white, pink, or saffron. Their school is of brick, like a London County Council School, and their curriculum apparently includes English cheering—a branch of study in which they seem to have made creditable progress.

All these things and the rest of the preparations and entertainments—most perfect in their way—were organized by General Raja Sir Amar Singh, K.C.S.I., Chief Minister of the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir, brother to the same, and father to the ten-year-old heir-presumptive—for the reigning highness is not blessed with offspring.

It is a short, stout highness, made stouter by its short, fur-lined cloaks, and it culminates in a prodigious round tower of white calico, beetling over two black eyes drowsy with opium. But that tower also is flat rather than lofty. His Highness shares loyally the strange dulness of his dominions.

And yet he is a *novus homo*—the immediate descendant of Ghulab Singh, who, having risen in the service of Ranjit Singh from the rank of a private trooper to the dignity of feudatory ruler of Jammu, repaid these gifts by deserting his Sikh masters in 1845. At that critical date, by a separate treaty with the English at Amritsar, he secured his own independence, and, on payment of £750,000,

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extended his power over Kashmir. In virtue of that highly business-like arrangement, our Maharaja is bound to recognise the supremacy of the British Government, to refer all disputes with neighbouring States to its arbitration, to furnish military assistance when required, and to employ no foreign official without the British Government's consent—obligations which were literally carried out through the Mutiny of 1857, when the ruling Prince's forces co-operated with the British in the Siege of Delhi. Within these limits the Maharaja is a sovereign prince, maintaining a large military establishment, enjoying the usual number of guns and other high-sounding honours, the only tangible token of his vassalage to the British Raj being an annual tribute of one horse, twenty-five pounds of wool, and three pairs of shawls. I have often wondered what the British Raj does with that yearly accumulating crop of Kashmir shawls.

The other day this practically-minded Prince received at the hands of the departing Viceroy a gift of powers which he never really lacked. It was exhilarating to see the Prime Minister, Sir Amar Singh, in the uniform of a British General and the turban of a Kashmir Raja, leading the procession as it marched slowly and solemnly, to the muffled strains of the band and the booming of the guns, through the courtyard of the Palace to the Durbar Hall. The Durbar having been declared open, the Viceroy, at the conclusion of his address to the Maharaja, presented him with a sword, saying:

'I hand to your Highness this sword as a symbol of the enhanced powers of administration with which I now declare you to be duly invested.'

The Maharaja then rose and candidly confessed:

'Language fails me to give adequate expression to the feeling of profoundest gratitude which is at the present moment in my heart.'

The gift was a reward for the Maharaja's 'faithful devotion to the interests of his people, and his loyal attachment to the paramount Power.' The latter claim is

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indisputable. Concerning the first I have my doubts, and these are strengthened by the Old Resident's ominous comment on the interesting rites described: 'May the Lord have mercy upon us!'

Indeed, the comparative absence of direct British control over the internal administration of this State, while securing the Maharaja's freedom, also fosters some of those romantic attributes to which Oriental rule owes its peculiar charm. Here is an example: Until a few months ago Wazir Lachman stood high in the Maharaja's favour. Whether he ceased to deserve his master's confidence, or whether his master ceased to deserve his servant's services, I cannot say, but suddenly the favourite Lachman found himself a prisoner. No charge, so far as I know, was formally preferred against him, no trial took place, yet the fallen courtier remained in durance.

His friends whispered—nay, some even wrote quaintly-phrased and prudently pseudonymous letters to the Indian Press, accusing the Maharaja of having lent too ready an ear to Lachman's jealous rivals. What rendered the hapless Lachman an especial object of pity was the fact that, during his imprisonment, his old mother fell ill. Now, a good Dogra is bound by his creed to tend his parents piously and personally in sickness. If medical science fails and all hope of recovery is lost, it is his duty to help them to perform the customary religious rites in his presence, and at the last moment to support their drooping heads on his knees. 'Now, can a man who is in prison far away from his parents discharge these sacred duties to them?' asked his friends, and they answered, rather obviously, 'Certainly not.' Poor Lachman supplicated his master for permission to go to his mother, but it was not granted until a report came from the medical authorities at Jammu notifying that the old lady was officially sick. By that time the old lady had become more than officially sick, and it was then only that Wazir Lachman was allowed to see her. But even then he remained under police guard, and so, for all practical pur-

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poses, absent. It was a painful case for both, and a source of profound perplexity to one of them.

'What must have been the thought of the old woman when she came to know that even at that critical moment her son was unable to attend on her?' asked my quaint native friend. 'Being in the private service of the Maharaja there could appear no reasons to her which justified the action in the case of her son. Is this not a hardship which alone is sufficient to bring tears to the heart of any Dogra?'

The Maharaja's conduct was all the more severely censured because, as everyone admits, he is well versed in the doctrines, customs, and usages of the Dogras, and could therefore not plead ignorance as an excuse for his enormities.

This is the story as it has been related to me. I repeat it because I consider it dimly enlightening. But I neither know which of the two—master or man—is the more to blame, nor have I any desire to blame either. In this business of tale-telling I rank myself with the humble chronicler, and believe that my sole affair is to record things as they happen. Let others, starting from fixed preconceived sympathies and animosities, reach definite condemnations. The dreamings and the schemings of the East interest me enough to prompt description, but not enough to inspire denunciation. I leave to others the genial task of lamenting the eternal depravity of Eastern despotism. To me these survivals of 'paternal rule' are chiefly interesting as illustrations of a theory of government all but extinct elsewhere. Eastern rule still means what all rule meant in the good old days of divine right and serfdom—namely, the greatest happiness of the smallest number. In Kashmir the smallest number is one. When the Maharaja travels, he kindly assumes that the rest of the universe wants to stand still. The entire transport of the country is, therefore, commandeered for days beforehand, and the ordinary would-be traveller, who has not the good fortune to be connected either with the Prince's or

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with the British Resident's Court, is met at every turn by State myrmidons armed with prior claims and long sticks. But what of that? Let ordinary mortals stay at home.

I cannot quite agree with those who hold that the salvation of the world lies in British control. Here in Kashmir I find such control execrated bitterly by some and acclaimed as bitterly by others. Generally I find the Mahomedan thinks it a duty to his Prophet to support whatsoever the Hindu denounces, and to denounce whatever the Hindu applauds. One of the latter recently deplored in a native journal the presence of Europeans in the Maharaja's service. A follower of the Prophet thereupon undertook to defend that presence as follows:

'The question is one in which the interests of the rulers and the ruled are alike at stake, and upon its solution depends the welfare of a multitude of principalities teeming with millions of inhabitants. The intervention of the British Government has indeed much improved the condition of Native States, but the improvement, it may safely be asserted, has not kept pace with the progressive India directly under British rule, much less with the advancement of the times, and consequently, with a few honourable exceptions, the existing system of government in them is still far from satisfactory. An atmosphere of intrigue, striking at the very root of good administration; periodical predominance of parties; attainment to power and position by undeserving individuals; unwholesome influence exercised by the zenana and Court fools; and non-amenability of State officials to courts of justice, are some of the ugliest spots which still continue to disfigure the "Indian Protectorate." This unsatisfactory condition is not due to a lack of interest on the part of the British Government, but is mainly the result of the extreme precaution taken in adopting measures threatening to destroy any of the attributes of internal sovereignty.

'The services of lent European officers have always done a great deal towards ameliorating the condition of several Native States, without lowering the prestige of their

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rulers. Even Kashmir would not have been what it is to-day, had it not taken advantage of the experience and administrative capacities of some of the best Englishmen who ever landed on Indian shores. In fact, nothing would give greater satisfaction to the British Government than the state of affairs making it possible for the Indian officials in the States to manage their own affairs in a trustworthy manner, and without creating that degree of misrule which may make it necessary for the paramount Power to interfere in their internal affairs; but the day is yet too far.'

There is a certain quantity of undeniable truism in this view. But the writer seems to start from the assumption that Native rule means inevitable misrule, and he ends whence he started. The late Lord Salisbury had a slightly different opinion on the subject:

'I may mention as an instance what was told me by Sir George Clerk, a distinguished member of the Council of India,' said he, 'respecting the province of Kathiawar, in which the English and Native Governments are very much intermixed. There are no broad lines of frontier there, and a man can easily leap over the hedge from the Native into the English jurisdiction. Sir George Clerk told me that the natives, having little to carry with them, were continually in the habit of migrating from the English into the Native jurisdiction, but that he never heard of an instance of a native leaving his own to go into the English jurisdiction.' This may be very bad taste on the part of the natives, he added, 'but you have to consider what promotes their happiness, suits their tastes, and tends to their moral development in their own way.' Indeed, Lord Salisbury considered it highly advantageous to maintain a system of Native States in India. 'I think that the existence of a well-governed Native State is a real benefit, not only to the stability of our rule, but because, more than anything, it raises the self-respect of the natives, and forms an ideal to which the popular feelings aspire. Whatever treaties or engagements may be entered into, I

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hope that I shall not be looked upon by gentlemen of the Liberal party as very revolutionary if I say that the welfare of the people of India must override them all.'

To my inexperienced ear this sounds suspiciously like sense. But I do not wish to dogmatize. In the course of this tour I have come across native rulers, like the Maharaja of Kashmir, whom words fail when they try to express their gratitude to the British Governess for her attentions, and I have come across rulers who curtly said: 'It is high time we got out of our leading-strings.' The former class are called loyal by Anglo-Indian officials, and the latter are scowled at. The unofficial and candid Old Resident, however, calls the former servile and the latter self-respecting.

Furthermore, it is well, in listening to a Mahomedan critic, to bear in mind the fact—notable, universally admitted and attested, among others, by the English educational authorities all over India—that the Indian Mahomedan is immeasurably inferior to his Hindu neighbour in intelligence. This deficiency I cannot attribute to any detrimental influence of the creed of Islam upon its followers. Such a theory can only be supported by a comprehensive ignorance of the history of Islam, or by an equally comprehensive anxiety on the thinker's part to push a creed of his own. The statement, often heard, that Mahomedanism is inimical to progress is beneath refutation. It might be as plausibly argued that the Mosaic Law is responsible for the Semitic nose.

The root of the Indian Mahomedan's backwardness may more reasonably be sought in his past. The present community consists partly of the descendants of conquerors whose initiative has been blunted by the long enjoyment of irresponsible power, and partly by the descendants of natives who, like the renegades of the Near East, had too much to lose by adherence to their faith, or everything to gain by its desertion—selfish aristocrats on the one hand, and, on the other, social outcasts, the two classes that apostates are mostly made of. The descen-

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FEEDING THE POOR AT JAMMU.

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dants of men who choose the line of least resistance seldom shine in a personal struggle with the Fates. On the other hand, the Hindus are the children of men who have held steadfastly to their traditions through centuries of suffering. The result must, in a large measure, be the survival of the strongest or, at all events, of the shrewdest.

However, be the explanation what it may, the fact is that in the free competition for Government patronage now fashionable the Mahomedan fails, and then he strives to regain his self-respect by magnanimously despising what he cannot obtain, or tries to counterbalance his intellectual shortcomings by an excessive loyalty to the powers that are. And the powers that are, I fear, do not rise superior to the temptation of turning these conditions to account, for I have in vain looked for any evidence of that moral superiority of the Mahomedan which is alleged to compensate for his intellectual infirmity. The want of wit does no more imply an abundance of honesty than the possession of wealth implies the want of other virtues. Even more fruitless, if possible, has been my search for evidence of the Mahomedan's boasted abhorrence of 'the art of ingratiating himself with the official classes.' If, as one of them recently declared, 'preferment and honours rarely come his way,' it is not because he is too good for these things. While muscle was the criterion of fitness for power, he prevailed; now that mind is the favourite standard, he fails. Every dog has his day. Allah is great and just in a Dracontian, general kind of way.

To return to matters more picturesque than political squabbles. On the day preceding the Prince's arrival the Governor of Jammu announced by beat of drum throughout the city and suburbs that the poor should assemble next Sunday at noon on the parade-ground in front of the brick-kilns to be fed in state. The proclamation was the result of a desire expressed by the Prince of Wales that the edible portion of the *ziafat*, or customary present of fruit and sweetmeats, of the value of Rs. 5,000, offered by the Durbar to His Royal Highness and party, should be

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converted into food and sweets to be distributed among the poor. At the appointed time the beggars gathered from far and near, on a spot surrounded by a cordon of regular troops and police, and divided into five separate blocks allotted to the following interesting classes of people in order of spiritual precedence: Hindus, Mahomedans, other castes, cripples, and sweepers. For the inhabitants of this land would rather starve in proud isolation than eat together.

At three o'clock in the afternoon began the feeding proceedings, and so earnest were they that a force of 250 military sepoys and police-constables had to be told off to keep the peace among the banqueters; but even these ministers of order had to be drawn from both the great castes, for a Hindu policeman could not interfere with a recalcitrant Mahomedan beggar in his dinner, nor would a Hindu beggar tolerate the contact of a Mahomedan constable. Thus they ate voraciously, and then washed the viands down with copious draughts from the Jogi Gate Canal, carried in skins by water-carriers of both sects. No fewer than 187 maunds of sweetmeats were that afternoon consumed in honour of the Prince of Wales.

The appetite of these subjects of His Highness the Maharaja produced a profound impression on my mind. But hunger is not the only affliction of the wretched people. Neither the physical grandeur of their country, nor the haunting holiness of the benevolent spirits, nor even the influence of the British Governess, can shield the State of Jammu and Kashmir from the common curse of India.

The plague, which in other parts of the peninsula is commonly and erroneously regarded as a visitor of recent arrival, here is known to be a guest of ancient standing. The Kashmir folk are fond of excommunicating one another with the expression *Piyoi tun!* (May the plague seize you!); and very often an old folk-saying embodies greater wisdom than a whole library of the bluest of Blue-books.

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The Chief Medical Officer of the State gives a curious account of this latest appearance of the scourge three years ago. A single imported case had been discovered, but was successfully isolated. Eight days afterwards one of the guards of the segregation camp was attacked. The story told of him is that he had gone into the tent where the dead body of the first plague victim was laid out and secretly bitten off the dead man's finger-ring with his teeth, intending to steal it. Although his body, like that of the first man, was buried in quicklime, fresh cases occurred soon afterwards among his relatives. Dr. Mitra suggests that this was because the remains were afterwards exhumed by his friends and brought to his home for reburial. The subsequent history of the epidemic does not differ to any material extent from that of outbreaks elsewhere. Some 1,400 deaths are recorded in the report, and the disease still continues flourishing.

And so adieu to Jammu, its mountains and its Maharaja, its politics, its poor, and its plagues.

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CHAPTER XI

A DAY IN AMRITSAR

A TEN hours' journey across another Punjab plain, but, Allah be praised, most unlike its predecessors: well watered by rivers, canals, and wells, and well wooded with forest and fruit-trees. It is only on the sandy uplands in the south-eastern parts that drought can be described as a standing danger. The rest of the land looks happy with a variety of vegetable abundance—wheat and barley, rice, mustard, cotton, sugar-cane, and tobacco.

And here is the capital of the district—Amritsar, which being interpreted means 'The Pool of Immortality.'

I plunge into the pool, and am overwhelmed by the unprecedented animation thereof. The tortuous streets, through which the royal procession is expected to pass, are a rapid succession of triumphal arches, crowned by quaint kiosks and carpeted with the complicated designs of Indian fabrics. The tall houses on either side are invisible behind similar carpets and shawls and gold-broidered rugs, while windows, balconies, and roofs are a solid mass of many-coloured veils and feminine ornaments glinting on dusky necks, ears, and noses.

On one of the mottoes stretched along the walls I read, 'Tell your parents that we are happy.' This from an Eastern people to a Royal Highness is most exhilaratingly straightforward language. What is more, it seems to be true. Amritsar is, indeed, the happiest pool that ever rippled under the hope of immortality, sustained by present prosperity. Second to Delhi alone among the

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cities of the Punjab in hoarded wealth, Amritsar is counted superior to it in commercial activity, being the medium for the trans-Himalayan traffic, and first of all in religious fervour. Though the Mahomedans, as the number of their minarets attests, form the majority of the population, and the temple domes bear witness to an almost equal number of Hindus, the Sikh minority revere this city as the citadel of their own faith, whose centre is this Golden Temple—a small square shrine, with domes and marble walls clothed in sheets of copper gilt, rising out of the middle of a large square lake or tank—in fact, the very Pool of Immortality whence the city derives its name and its fevers. But let me not anticipate.

I enter the enclosure, and am conducted to a place where my shoes are taken off and my feet encased in tasselled slippers of bright green. Thus protected against the possibility of polluting, I tread, not comfortably, along a passage peopled with bulls, calves, hens, broad-tailed sheep, and other pious worshippers, and ascend the marble causeway which connects one side of the tank with the temple. This path brings me to the marble terrace around the temple, lined by semi-naked saints, their brows hideous with immense sect marks; by beggars sitting behind small heaps of rice and grain given unto them by the worshippers; and by cripples, one of whom held out to me a pair of hands each consisting of one long thumb, and each growing almost direct from the shoulder.

A stream of men and women, heads and necks bright with wreaths of yellow marigold, is pouring in and out of the shrine, and from within comes a great din of cymbals and stringed instruments, mingled with the droning of prayer.

I enter to find on one side, sitting cross-legged on the polished floor, a band of musicians such as I had often met before in the 'Arabian Nights Entertainments.' A garlanded high-priest sits cross-legged behind a pile of silk cushions and carpets, upon which rests open a giant

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volume of many yellow leaves covered with mysterious characters. He drones on, while worshippers come in and out, leaving in the middle of the floor their offerings of rice, grain, shells, and coins.

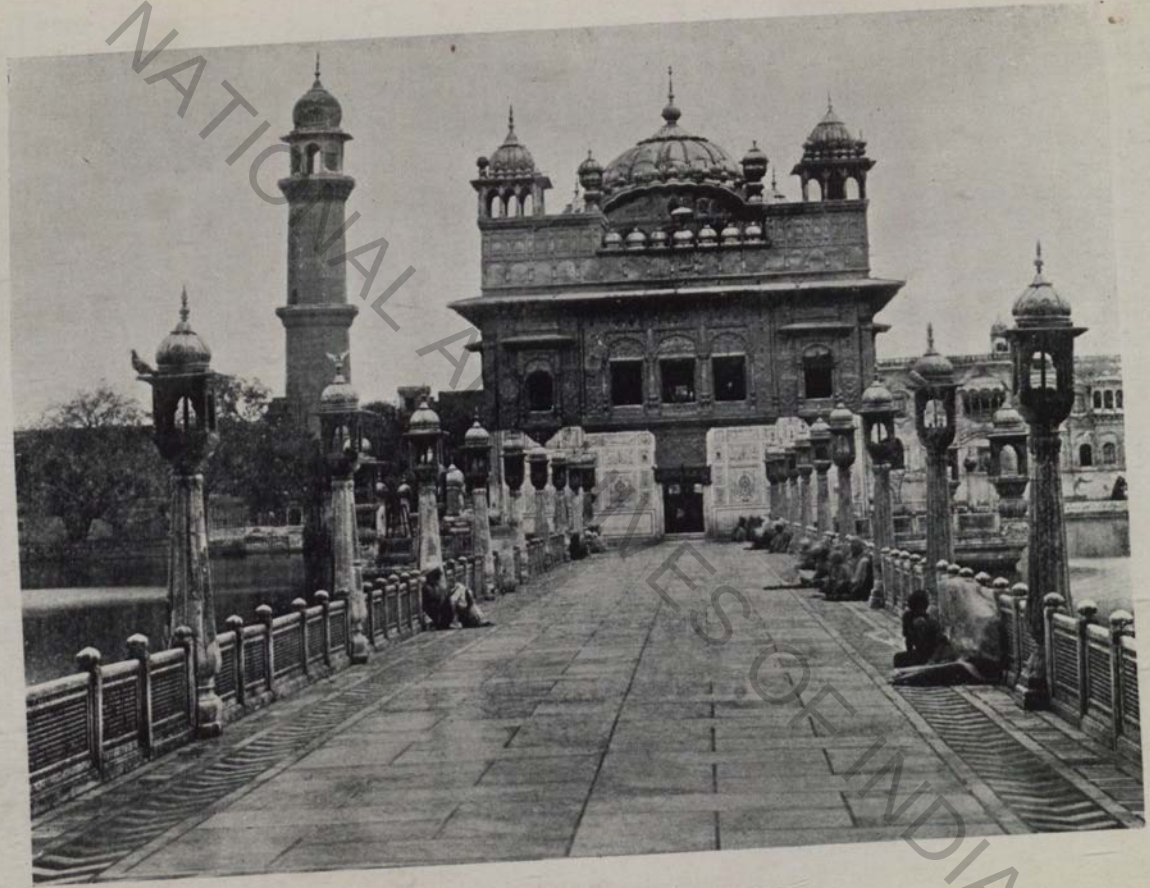
As I moved through the crowd, an object of as lively and friendly interest to them as they were to me, a minister of the temple offered me one of the festal wreaths of marigold. I began to feel no longer a stranger, but almost a lineal descendant of Nanak Shah, the founder of the Sikh sect, who more than four centuries ago arose in the Punjab to preach that there is no Hindu or Mahomedan, but one God the Father of all. I felt a spiritual kinship with his followers around me, and some gratitude towards Ram Dass, the fourth Guru, who built this temple in 1574.

The Old Resident, omniscient and omnipresent, informs me that the original copy of the Sikh Bible—the *Granth*, —begun by the first Guru, continued by his fifth successor, Arjun, and completed by the twelfth and last Guru, Govind Singh—is still preserved in this temple. Perhaps it is the very volume now open under the nose of yon venerable high-priest.

The hum of human voices and the cooing of doves is now heard through the din of the band and the droning of prayers, and, lifting my eyes up, I see some of those birds flitting to and fro from one gilt cornice to another, while pairs of men are visible between the gilt pillars of a gallery aloft, now exchanging a few whispered remarks, now gazing on to the performance below, like so many occupants of the boxes in a theatre.

The absence of formalism from Sikh worship is remarkable. This temple—almost the only one possessed by this warlike and disciplined sect—is rather a Quakers' meeting-house than a home of Eastern ritual. So far as I can make out, the chanting recitation from the *Granth* is the main part of the service—if service that can be called which is so full of freedom. The only approach to symbolism I can detect is a sacred cake of which the congregation partakes before dispersing. The Old Resident

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THE GOLDEN TEMPLE, AMRITSAR.

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now tells me that, had I stayed a little longer, I should have been offered a share of this *Karah prasad;* but I had no time to spare even for a hallowed breakfast.

As I walked out again in my unfamiliar slippers, I very nearly stumbled into the arms of a curious person whose breast was covered with a steel plate, whose arms were encased in steel, whose head was a pyramid of steel rings, and whose waistband contained at least half a dozen swords. It was an apparition bristling with hair and daggers; but he smiled reassuringly—nay, even propitiatingly. I ventured to insult him with an offering equal in value to twopence sterling. He took the insult in a most cordial manner.

Once more outside in the crowded streets, I was assailed with gifts of other than sacred character. These were nothing else than printed pamphlets and price-lists informing me that Mr. Lachman Dass Bharany sold the best silks on earth; that, if I wanted carpets, I could not do better than pay a visit to the stores of Messrs. Shumbhoo Nath and Rugonath Dass; and that no self-respecting traveller ever went through the Pool of Immortality without encumbering himself with a great load of shawls from the shop of Mr. Badha Kishen Bharany, shawl and Indian curiosity merchant. Indeed, if holy fervour is one of the dominant notes of the city, the other is made up of the crash and creak of innumerable looms. In this sanctuary of a militant sect it seems possible for commerce and creed to flourish together. The Sikh, like other dissenters nearer to me, if not dearer, is supremely capable of walking with his head in the clouds and his feet firmly planted upon solid earth. The daily contemplation of eternal interests does not disqualify him for the successful pursuit of very temporal ends. Spiritual at once and practical, he sees in worldly prosperity a tangible proof of Divine approbation; and, while striving for his own comfort, he has no doubt that he is promoting the kingdom of God.

'Tell your parents that we are happy!' I begin to

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feel the full force of the motto as I wander through the well-stocked bazaars, looking into shops brimming with wealth and into faces smiling with the knowledge that it is all well both in this life and in the next.

'Two great religious fairs are annually held in Amritsar, and the annual value of its imports and exports exceeds £4,000,000,' says the Old Resident, happily unaware that he is adding point to one of the shrewdest psychological studies that have ever been penned by gifted journalist.

In other directions, also, my keen eye sees evidence of a successful reconciliation between the two worlds—efforts at reform conceived in the modern practical fashion and carried out by methods quite modern, even comical in this environment. And, what pleases me most, in these movements I find the Hindu vying with the Sikh. I will mention three examples. First, the Khalsa College for Sikh youths, founded in 1890 by the munificence of the Sikh Princes of the Punjab, conspicuous among its patrons being the ancient Maharaja of Nabha—the most abnormally progressive patriarch that ever suffered from asthma—and the fourteen-year-old Maharaja of Patiala—the most precocious and magnificent highness that ever wore pearled turban. Both these chiefs and some others were present this morning under the *shamiana* in which were received the Prince and Princess of Wales. On entering the tent the royal guests were greeted by the Sikh salutatation, *Wahi-Guru-ji-ka-Khalsa-Sri Wahi-Guru-ji-ki-Fateh*—perhaps the longest greeting ever uttered by human throat at a single breath. I will not translate it, partly because it looks more impressive in its native obscurity, and partly because I do not understand it. The same limitation I must reluctantly confess with regard to the cheers with which the saffron-turbaned scholars sped the parting guests. They vociferated *Sat-Sri-Akal*,* which may mean anything that is good. Even more mysterious was the prayer in which a sonorous Sikh lifted up his voice when

* The Old Resident tells me that it means 'The Eternal alone is Real.' What of the price-lists?

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the Prince and Princess thought themselves on the verge of deliverance. He prayed loud and long, the only words intelligible to me being *mubarak—Raja—Rani*, that is, 'prosperous,' 'King,' 'Queen.' I think I may hazard the conjecture that the performance was a prayer for the prosperity of the royal family.

The second proof of real progress to which I have alluded is also due to the initiative of the white-bearded Maharaja of Nabha, and concerns the re-marriage of Hindu widows—by far the most pitiable class of women that never grumbled. All sections of the Hindu community at Nabha are said to be at one with their Sikh Prince, who a few months ago deputed an official to collect the opinion of the leading Hindus in the larger cities of the Punjab.

The third good omen was an open-air meeting held at Patiala lately under the presidency of the Commander-in-Chief of the State forces—a stalwart Sikh with black beard most bravely curled upwards. The meeting was largely attended by officers and soldiers and members of the local Singh Sabha. Mahant Gyan Singh quoted the Sikh scriptures that the use of intoxicants was highly objectionable and injurious, and should in no case be indulged in by Sikhs. Colonel Sundar Singh proposed that a Temperance Society be started in the army and the selling of rum by the military authorities stopped, and, further, that co-operative army stores and army banks be introduced, the latter to lend money at very low interest. These resolutions were unanimously adopted. A number of officers and soldiers pledged themselves to abstain from intoxicants, and a register was opened for further names.

Thus Amritsar lives and thrives, praying and trafficking. It trafficks with Bokhara, Tibet, and Afghanistan on the north, with Bombay and Calcutta on the south, and on the west with Persia and—Manchester; buying grain, pulses, sugar, salt, oil, cotton, glass, or English stuffs, re-selling the same, together with its own rich fabrics

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of wool and silk and those shawls of many patterns which, woven on the loom from the fine fleeces of Tibetan goats, form, next to the Golden Temple, the chief boast of local industry. There are thousands of such looms here, worked by deft fingers of Kashmir extraction—quite a little colony, already a century old.

If you want to realize the inner meaning of this ceaseless creaking and crashing (at this moment to be heard only in the deserted back streets of whose existence the princely procession wots not, and which care little for such processions), you have only to walk into that shop at the corner just beyond where that pariah dog yawns in the sun. You enter and ask of the fat and smiling Mr. Shumbhoo-Nath-Rugonath-Dass for the price of a first-class shawl. You must be an ataractic Stoic, hardened beyond the possibility of emotion, indeed, or a born buyer of shawls, if you can avoid a thrill on hearing that you can have a full-sized article of the best quality for only £50.

In addition to its shawls and silks, Amritsar is famous as the favourite playing-ground of all the diseases that morbid doctor ever invented: fevers of all kinds, dysentery and diarrhœa, small-pox and plague, are all to be had here for nothing, in this respect differing from the shawls.

'What else can you expect?' asks the cynical Old Resident, 'from a city built in a hollow between two pestiferous rivers, with a medieval apostle for a founder?'

'Nothing,' I answer simply, for I am convinced that to the holy Guru the proximity of this holy and unwholesome pool was the main architectural attraction. He acted according to his lights, even as did the pious monks who founded the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford on the two unhealthiest spots which they were able to find in England.

The site was granted to the apostle of the Sikhs in the middle of the sixteenth century by the artful Emperor Akbar, presumably in the hope that its miasmatic influence would effectually dispose of the pestilent heresy. But the

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gods willed it otherwise. Soon a great city grew round the Pool of Immortality. It grew and, despite Ahmad Shah's comprehensive blowing up of the temple and spoliation of the town in 1761, it continued to grow. The shrine, polluted by the unspeakable Shah with the blood of bullocks, was, immediately on his departure, purified, the pool resumed its placid immortality, and a few years later, when Ranjit Singh seized the holy city, the great sanctuary of the Sikhs was embellished and covered with the thin plates of gold which still glitter in the sunlight up above and in the deep bosom of the lake below. Since then Amritsar has gone on growing in holiness, wealth, and unhealth. But its demonstrative children declare, 'Tell your parents that we are happy,' and they assuredly know full well what is good for them.

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CHAPTER XII

DELHI

'WHAT a host of romantic memories the mere sound of the name awakens!' Thus my platitudinarian friend, as we gazed at the crenellated walls of Delhi, here and there crumbling, as though under the weight of self-conscious uselessness, yet, on the whole, carrying their years and their battlements with the dignity of all that is stolid. They still encircle the city on three sides, proud and massive, as they did when Shah Jahan built them, what time our good King Charles II. toyed with his dogs and his duchesses in England. And they are still pierced by ten gates, lofty and wide, one leading northward to Kashmir, two to remote Kabul, another to Lahore of dismal personal memories, and so forth.

Delhi is a city very much at the centre of things, mounting guard at the point where the central hills of the Punjab drop upon the right bank of the Jumna—just now a river in exceedingly embarrassed circumstances. And for a dozen miles around this trafficking, shouting town of to-day spread the silent ruins of a succession of imperial capitals, comprehensively designated by the intelligent tourist as 'Old Delhi,' but each marking the birth and death of a distinct dynasty, once powerful, now of interest to the archæologist, the artist, and the jackal.

It is a town with a past. From the very first appearance of the Aryan race in the Indian peninsula this spot seems to have been occupied by a great city, beginning with Indraprastha, whose date is by the ingenious fixed fifteen hundred years before the birth of Christ. A detailed

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account of this earliest-known capital and of the demigods who built it is given in the formidable epic of the 'Mahabharata'—the oceanic 'Iliad' of Hindustan—wherein those who have nothing else to do may read how five heroes, at the head of a mighty horde of Aryans, descended upon the quiet banks of the Ganges, and, having rooted out the children of the soil and its forests, planted the kingdom of Indraprastha, and how, having subdued the alien races, they turned their swords against one another and performed many valorous deeds of brotherly throat-cutting. For thirty generations, exactly, the posterity of these mythical heroes misruled the realm gloriously, and those who finally ousted it from the throne reigned for a thousand years more, until they, in turn, were supplanted by a new royal line of fifteen generations. All this is set forth by the conscientious chronicler with calm, mathematical symmetry, according to the rules of the game which all early logographers have played ever since Prometheus taught mankind the 'marvellous combinations of letters.'

It is a game as simple as bridge and almost as inspiring. All that the player needs is a starting-point, a piece of paper, some patience, and no sense of humour. Beginning from the present and the known, he walks backward into the past and surmise. When he has reached the end of his dates, he takes up his tape and divides all that lies beyond by as many generations as he can invent.

It is only about the Christian era that the mists begin to cohere into comparative probability, and then for the first time we hear the name of Delhi, which to my friend is fraught with such a load of romantic memories. The earliest light thrown on the origin of the city and its name emanates from the famous column of solid iron erected by Raja Dhava in the fourth century, and by the small angular Sanskrit inscription carved deeply into it. This weighty document declares that its author was also the author of Delhi. But the living tradition, in defiance of the written word, attributes both the column and the

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city and its name to Anang Pal, founder of the Tuar dynasty in the eighth century of our era. According to the folk historian, a holy Brahman informed the King that the column was so deeply sunk into the earth that its invisible end touched the sacred head of the serpent-god Vasuki, who bears upon him the burden of this wicked world. Therefore, so long as the column stood erect and immobile, the King and his posterity would be firm on their throne. The King, being poor in faith, caused the column to be unearthed, and, as the iron shaft was torn out, its root was found dripping with the immortal blood of the serpent-god. In face of this terrible demonstration, Anang Pal professed a great contrition for his infidelity, and commanded that the column should be planted again in its old position. But the angered god rendered the operation impossible. The column refused to take root again. Henceforth the city was known as Delhi (*dhila*)—that is, 'loose.' The only truth in this tradition is that Anang Pal rebuilt the city, which had fallen into decay, and raised it from a heap of rubbish to the dignity of a capital for his race.

Henceforth we have the usual cycle of Indian history, conqueror following upon the heels of conqueror, thrones raised upon the ruins of thrones, dynasties rising and dynasties crumbling to dust—Hindus, Pathans, Afghans, Moghuls, Mahrattas, down to the British conquest in 1803.

This is the tale illustrated by the extant stones. On this side of the city, close to the river-bank, stands the imperial palace of the Moghuls, within its lofty pink walls, its stubby round towers and arched gateway, now partly converted into English barracks. Across the river frown the ruins of the Salimgarh or Salim Fort, erected in the sixteenth century by Salim Shah. And between these two monuments of the past stretches the iron bridge over which the East Indian Railway enters the city, crosses it, and disappears roaring through the north-western wall.

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Strength and solidity are the two words that a superficial view of Delhi suggests. These characteristics are also seen in some of its brick buildings, no less than in its fortifications. Three thoroughfares intersect it, filling the unsophisticated visitor with surprise at their breadth and unscented airiness, as he strolls under the rows of neem and peepul trees which spread their thick foliage overhead. But the surprise does not endure. In the vast expanse of the city beyond these few streets you are confronted with the usual chaos of ague-stricken dwellings, bazaars, gaudy or simply dirty, crowds busy or at least noisy, creaking bullock-carts, barking dogs, stray goats, erring bulls and cows, which the native cicerone describes as sacred and the Old Resident as 'a damned nuisance.'

I am rather disposed to agree with the latter, as, deafened and choked with dust, I just contrive to avoid a cage of ragged red cloth suspended from a pole which sways between two brown bearers. It is a palanquin concealing a high-born Mahomedan lady. And, as soon as I have successfully avoided this peril, I am very nearly wedged between two other cages revolving on wheels, drawn by skeleton ponies. They are two of those things which men call ekkas—vehicles ingeniously designed to combine the minimum of space and speed with the utmost of unhappiness to both man and beast. I said man for short, but, in fact, each of these microscopic vehicles contains half a dozen men, women, and children, clinging to the rickety posts at the four corners for dear life and limb.

Eager to escape from the disillusion of the actual, you try to imagine these thoroughfares, now alive with the hum and the hookas and smells of two hundred thousand human beings, mostly in holiday mood, as they were once and again in days not far removed—scenes of savage clamour and carnage: you hear the execrations of the combatants, the deep groans of the dying, the shrieks of women, and then comes the grim silence of death. Ah, those were days worth dying in—or, at all events, it is

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the proper thing to think so; for are not those scenes the stuff that heroic 'Iliads,' guide-books, and romantic memories are made on?

The last event that looms large and grim in this chapter of horrors is the Mutiny. On the very morning after the outbreak at Meerut the rebels appeared under the walls of Delhi. The British officials retired to the Lahore Gate, where they were cut to pieces. This was the signal for a general massacre of the Europeans in the town. For a few brief weeks Delhi became once more the capital of free Moghul anarchy. But the British, after a long and stormy siege, recaptured the city and its ephemeral Emperor, who, banished to Burma, died in Rangoon in 1862—a curiously quiet death. But his two sons, who had fled to the great tomb of Humayun, about four miles distant, were discovered and shot by Hodson. Delhi was temporarily cleared of its native population, which, however, was readmitted soon afterwards, on the understanding that it would refrain from the murder of Europeans. A few months after the surrender, Delhi, like a true Oriental, settled down to commerce and worship. If any bitterness still lingered, it was assuaged by the conviction that Allah is great and his decrees inscrutable. In 1877 Delhi was the scene of the proclamation which made the Sovereign of the United Kingdom Emperor of India.

At the present hour the city which has so often been the scene of carnage is the centre of seven railway lines, and the only smoke that rises to disfigure the blue heavens is that of its factory chimneys. 'Delhi City has all the advantages which peace, civilization, and railway enterprise can bring about; and for these advantages and blessings we render true gratitude to His Majesty, the King-Emperor, and his benign rule.' So ran the address of much-adjectived welcome presented to the Prince of Wales by the city Fathers the other morning in a pavilion erected amid the palms and the pines and the weeping willows of the Town Hall garden. Among these muni-

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Silver Street, Delhi.

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cipal worthies there were a few silk-hatted and frock-coated Europeans, but the rest represented all the races and creeds of the land, each arrayed in his peculiar shade of silk, each turbaned after the fashion of his tribe, each bowing and retreating with special awkwardness, yet all avowing a common anxiety to give expression to a feeling of 'profound loyalty and devotion to the person of the King-Emperor.'

On the following day these manifestations of civic devotion were repeated under a different form and under another pavilion in the Circuit House—in the broad cantonments outside the city walls, where live the men from the West—by the petty chiefs of the district, under the jurisdiction of the Commissioner of Delhi. There were among them the Raja of Sirmur, the Sardar of Kalsia, and the Nawabs of Patandi, Loharu, and Dirjana, accompanied by the British political officers attached to each, and there was held the normally dull Durbar, each chief, as he was presented, offering his *nazr* of one gold mohur, which, as usual, was touched and remitted. They all looked as though they had been vassals of the British Raj since the day of Indraprastha.

Lastly, the visit has been commemorated by a learned pundit in a Sanskrit poem distributed broadcast. After a quantity of benedictions, the poet continues in the following characteristic strain: 'This sacred land called Hariana, the bestower of all sorts of comforts and blessings, the capital of powerful princes of ancient India, and beautiful as Amaravatipuri, the residence of the immortal gods, has regained its beauty and splendour by the benign influence of the footprints of your Royal Highnesses. Our delight and ecstasy to-day at the great privilege of having a sight of your Royal Highnesses resemble those derived by the *chakor* at the sight of the moon, by the flowers and the birds of the jungle at the advent of the spring, by the lotuses at the rising of the sun, by the bees on seeing a collection of water-lilies, and by peacocks at the sound of thunder. Thy rule, O Raja Maharaja, the bestower of

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so many blessings, may it last for ever, may it continue to the end of the world!'

Such is 'New Delhi.'

I made another heroic effort to escape from the dulness of the actual by a retrospective expedition to the melancholy remnants of 'Old Delhi.' I left the city by the Ajmer Gate—broad and tall and studded with sharp spikes of no friendly intent—and soon found myself on a road lined with trees, up and down whose trunks the squirrels disported themselves merrily. Some of those trees were pines—paler than the pines of Europe and full of stranger secrets, yet, beyond cavil, pines. Other trees looked like acacias, but were not. Some were peepul-trees, and a few—I must really abandon the attempt. What I do know concerning these things is not worth knowing. A new-comer to India is often advised by the wise Old Resident 'to get up the trees of the country.' But he usually profits by the advice as much as if it were meant literally.

For my part, I have succeeded in getting up two of the uncommon trees which are so common in this country—the banyan and the peepul. For the rest, to me a tree is a tree—a thing of green leaves and flowers whose shade and fragrance I appreciate gratefully, when I can get them, but whose name, character, and domestic habits I want to know no more than those of the casual fellow-traveller who thinks himself in duty bound to inform me that it is a fine day, or that God is great. But this is not the way in which the native of India looks upon his trees. His soul is a curious compound of crass utilitarianism and gross symbolism, even animism. Accordingly, he values his trees partly for the food and timber with which they supply him, and partly for the gods which they shelter; but for their kindly shade or their beauty he has no regard. Of the two trees that I know intimately, the banyan is the hugest and the peepul the holiest. The waist of the banyan is a thing to be estimated by the yard, and its offspring by the million. It grows and grows, in a greedy,

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desultory, imperialistic manner, until the main trunk with its surrounding progeny forms a many-arched cathedral, much frequented by the elephants and peasants, who relish its leaves and its fruit respectively. From the midst of this maze of columns sometimes you see springing a stately palm. Your first impression is that it has grown out of the banyan, but the Old Resident informs you that the banyan has grown round it, and is now sucking its life-sap out of it.

The peepul is also apt to multiply in an erratic fashion, but its innocent vagaries do not take root in the soil, nor do they prey on their neighbours. They run riot, prodigal yet self-supporting, twisting and turning themselves like snakes in and out of the crevices of dead walls, beautifying what they destroy. It is one of the five sacred trees of Hindustan. Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva all live within it, accompanied by their families. And when the wind plays among the leaves of the peepul, swaying the long pendant stalks gently to and fro, in their innumerable whispering the devout Hindu hears the secret voices of his gods, even as the unwashed priests of Zeus heard the voices of theirs in the rustling of the oaks of Dodona. The Old Resident informs me that 'a pious Hindu will often take off his shoes when he comes to a peepul, and walk five times round it, from left to right, repeating as he does so a verse which says: "The roots are Brahma, the bark Vishnu, the branches the Mahadeos. In the bark lives the Ganges, the leaves are the minor deities. Hail to thee, King of trees!"'

Now, this is a dialect which I understand far better than the bastard Latin of botany. I therefore beg the Old Resident not to call the sacred tree *Ficus religiosa*, but to call it peepul, and to give me some more unscientific and interesting information. He tells me that 'if a man takes a peepul leaf in his hand and, crushing it, expresses a wish that the gods may so crush him if he is not telling the truth, the oath is regarded as of the utmost sanctity.' This is a thing worth remembering, and of more than symbolical interest.

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Thus we travel along, passing, and being passed by, rattling little ekkas, big lurching buffaloes, peasants mounted on bullocks, others mounted on donkeys, and yet others mounted on their long lean legs, a stick on the shoulder, from which swing the poor fellow's worldly possessions tied up in a patched rug, and behind him walks his wife: if Mahomedan, in breeches, if Hindu, in long skirts, beginning at the hips and leaving the middle of the body up to the breasts conventionally bare. In either case, barefooted, bejewelled, dust-covered, and serene.

From either side of the road stretch fields, in vain praying for water, except here and there where the patient bullock draws it from deep wells. On those spots the land is green; beyond, all is as bare and brown as yon peasant lady's middle. And now from the dry fields begin to rise the ruins of ancient tombs: domes, some whole, others cracked, all gray with lichen and dry moss. Halfway we pass a great mausoleum in perfect preservation, and surrounded by hovels whose walls are thick with dung-cakes. 'Have you ever seen past magnificence and present misery in a more melancholy juxtaposition?' asks the Old Resident reflectively.

Most magnificent among these monuments and most melancholy is the Kutab Minar, just come into view. It soars out of the green trees into the blue heavens—a great sugar-loaf of pink sandstone and pale marble, girdled by four galleries which divide it into five stories, each story a little narrower than the one below it. We alight and wander towards it through the dust of the Hindu city Lalkot, destroyed by the ruthless Crescent. For this tower, begun by Kutab-ud-din towards the end of the twelfth century and finished by his successor some thirty years later, is a monument of Islam triumphant and intolerant. It rises out of the dust of its victims, strong and stern, looking haughtily down upon the ruins of the vanquished and upon the trees which droop over them like a pall spread by pious hands over the dead, and upon the forlorn cows which roam under the trees in search of

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fodder, and upon the white vultures which mount guard on the corners of many a roofless wall and pillar supporting nothing. It rises story over story, alternately encased in convex and rectangular flutings—a giant sheaf of stone, bound at intervals by balconies and belts bearing sacred texts from the Koran. It is not devoid of grace, but it is the heavy grace of a somewhat corpulent, painted, and elaborately ornamented beauty of the East. In its mechanical succession of stories and in its monotonous alternation of round curve and sharp angle it presents a magnificent example of the genius of Asia —so fond of detail, so contemptuous of the large, masterly simplicity of what we call Art; in one word, so childish.

We wander in and out of some of the other tombs—ruined gateways leading into emptiness, and roofless walls of red sandstone minutely sculptured with arabesque designs and sacred texts, full of a great silence, deepened by the cooing of the wild-doves aloft and the echoless fall of our footsteps on the marble floor beneath. We cast a glance at Raja Dhava's iron column and its Sanskrit hieroglyphics; also at the inscriptions carved into its smooth face, age after age, by Hindu and Mahomedan dagger, some accompanied with mysterious sketches of fishes, flowers, elephants, and what not. Even in its *cacoethes scribendi* the East takes itself more seriously than the West. What knicker-bockered tourist would have had the patience to carve his name into solid iron and to illuminate it? See on the opposite wall his mark: Smith, Jones, Brown, and the rest of the romantic cognomens, scrawled with perishable lead-pencil.

And so back to Shahjahanbad, the city of Shah Jahan —modern, living, dirty Delhi. It is evening. The glowing purple of the sky has faded into rose, rose has paled into primrose, and presently, behold, the moon of the East is afloat on an ocean of blue, as dark and deep as any other Eastern mystery.

The Old Resident joins me on the veranda, and we

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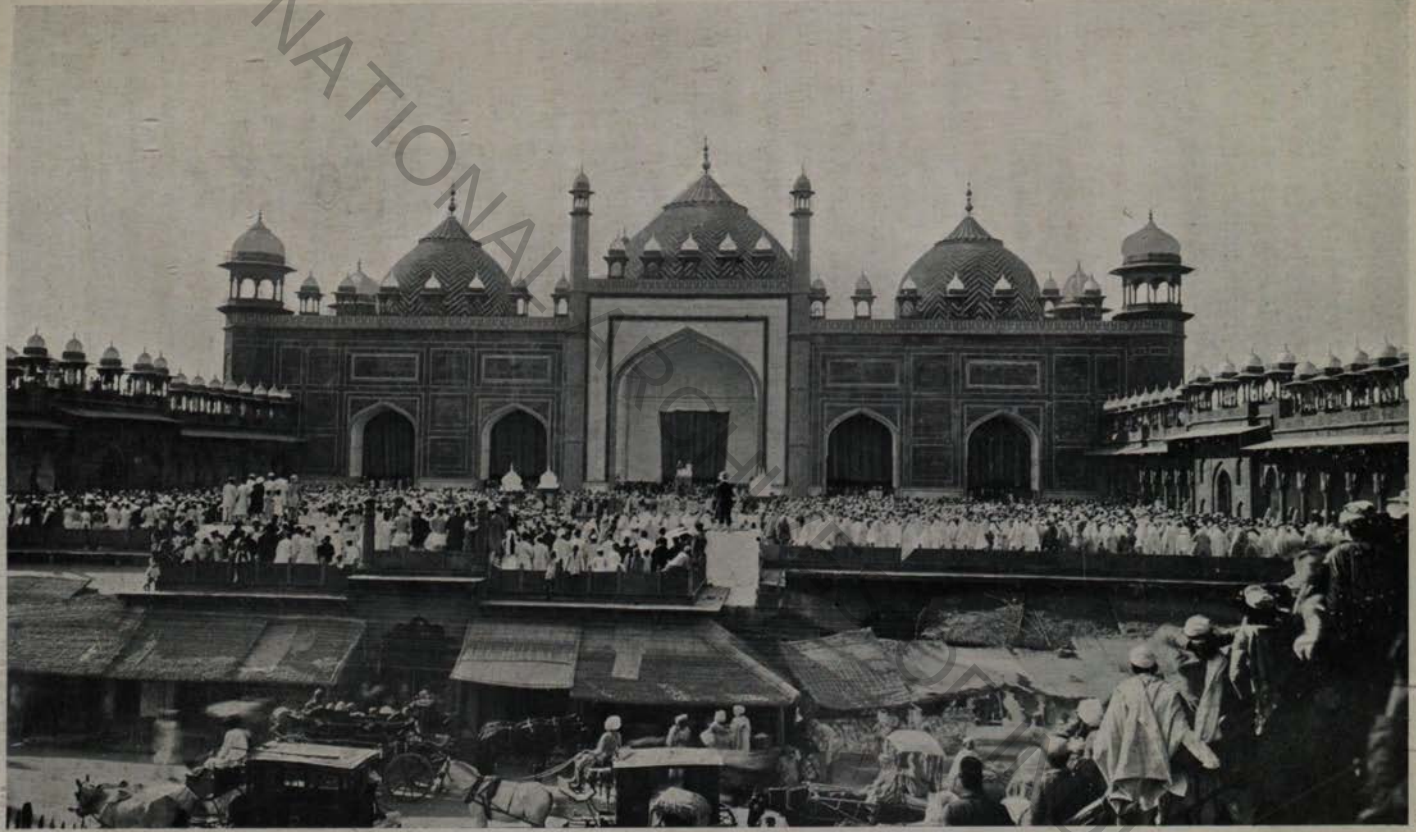
sit, side by side, gazing into the moonlit compound—he smoking, and I conjuring up ghosts from the past. The picture of the bazaar yonder returns before my mind's eye. Out of this carnival of unmentionable shabbiness rises the great Jama Masjid, with its immense white cupolas and pink minarets. But even these lack the one thing that lends to the mosque of the Near East its sublime meaning. 'In ancient times,' had said my native cicerone, 'the muezzins used to call the people to prayer from those balconies, but now they do so only from a low platform inside the mosque.'

I dream of many a divine evening in Old Cairo, or, better still, in Constantinople. The sun has sunk, and the turbaned muezzins emerge, one by one, on the circular balconies of the minarets—hundreds of which taper, slim and white, from amidst the roofs, domes, and tree-tops—and the evening chant floats over the city: 'God the Most High! There is no god but God, and Mahomed is the apostle of God. Great is God! I bear witness that there is no god but God.' Thus runs the message from above, each sentence repeated twice, as the muezzin walks slowly round and round the circular gallery, with his right hand lifted up to his right cheek, chanting to the four quarters of the earth. At the call, the faithful, wherever they may chance to be, prostrate themselves to their Creator, and even the faithless feels the thrill of a novel emotion within him—an emotion which is due perhaps as much to the soft starlight as to the hymn.

Suddenly the muezzin's voice has died away, but its echoes haunt the night air. How strange his message was! how solemn and how sacred! How remote and yet how intimate! How much more human and holy than the clash and the clangour of yon church bell! How——'Have a peg before turning in?' It is the Old Resident's voice. Oh the bathos of things! We order pegs, and the spell is broken.

'Now that you have seen both Delhis, what do you think of them?' asks my companion.

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THE JAMA MASJID, DELHI—CELEBRATING *ID.*

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'I think the old is very properly dead, and the only fault I can find with the new is that it is not.'

'Oh, but it will soon be,' he assures me genially.

'Plague?' demanded I.

'No; at least, not yet—drought.'

'I have already said more than could be safely said on the subject,' answered I. 'The English-reading public does not love painful pictures. It damns them as inartistic.'

'The English-reading public is a cow,' said he concisely.

A period of tangible silence followed this momentous pronouncement; for the Old Resident spoke with conviction, and I felt unable to contradict him.

'As to the plague,' he resumed after a while, 'last year it was pretty lively, and there was some hope that the villainous traders and their touts would clear out of Delhi in a panic. However, it did not come off. This year the disease has not yet paid us its annual visit, but it will be here in another month or so.'

'What precautions does your miscellaneous municipality take?'

'Oh, there is, or was, a Vigilance Plague Committee, which has already managed to eradicate——'

'The disease?'

'Oh Lord, no—a few thousand rats!'

'What else did it do?'

'It published a memorandum advising the people to wash occasionally their clothes and their persons, and not to give the bedding of the deceased to the sweepers, as the custom is.'

I no longer wondered at the success of the epidemic, but I began to wonder at the multitude of survivors.

'So you are not impressed by the romance of Delhi?' he asked presently.

'Well, the native city may be romantic, but the European cantonments are clean, and man cannot live on romance alone,' said I aphorismatically.

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He shook his head in assent, and then added in a lowered voice:

'Between ourselves, I think there would be less written about the romance of India if writers had the ability to see with their own eyes or the courage to describe what they saw. As it is, they just follow one another as the blind beggars do, each afraid lest he should be left behind —be called Philistine. My own opinion is that the romance of India is a monstrously overrated thing.'



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CHAPTER XIII

AGRA

We arrived under the lofty, massive, and shaky red walls of the Fort of Agra on the 16th of the month—a day auspicious in Hindustan. The Hindu calendar, as every schoolmaster knows, or ought to know, overlaps ours, and the middle day of a Roman month coincides with the Hindu *Sankranti*, or day of transition: a mystic milestone on life's road, or a *dak* bungalow at which the pilgrim rests for a moment to look backward and forward, to count up the fulfilments of prayers that are past, and to prepare himself for fresh disappointments. Happy the man who, having eased his heart of memories and hopes, pursues his way looking neither backward nor forward, but with his eyes serenely fixed on the path before his feet.

I enter the great Fort, passing between gates copper-plated, flat-nailed, and adorned with many a mysterious hexagram, a mighty shield against the Spirits of Evil. I traverse court after court, and, climbing up the stone galleries, I reach the ramparts, whence I look down upon the city of Agra. Here, as in every other part of this ancient land, past and present meet—or rather fail to meet; for between the hypothetical Agra of the 'Mahabharata' and the Agra of the Moghul Emperors creeps the broad river Jumna, yellow, tepid, and torpid, its banks seamed with bathing-steps which lead down to acres of arid sand.

On the east, or left, bank of the river spread the relics of the ancient city—few and faint records of men and

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women whose earthly career is all but lost in the shifting sands of legend. For before the advent of the Moghuls Agra was the capital of the Lodi Kings, all traces of whose splendour lie buried in yon domed, mouldy, and ruined tombs. On the west, or right, bank stands the modern city, founded in the middle of the sixteenth century by Akbar, and called after him Akbarabad; and close to it gleam the white and gray houses of the European cantonment, embedded in their trees. And the land around the dead and the living and the native and the exotic alike is scarred with ravines, while clouds of dull earth, borne aloft by the easterly wind, roll over the flat roofs of the city beneath my feet.

Even so did they when the Padishah Babar, having slain the last of the Lodi Kings in the Battle of Panipat, near Delhi, occupied their capital in 1526. Babar's was a breezy, cheerful, almost childish soul, and no lover of the dry and the dismal in things. Thus he describes his flight after a crushing defeat: 'We reached a village, where we found nice fat flesh, well-baked bread of fine flour, sweet melons and delicious grapes in great plenty. I never tasted the joys of life more keenly or felt so deeply the pleasures of peace and abundance.' A man who could eat thus on the day after he had lost a kingdom was capable of anything. He could endure defeat with a good grace and enjoy good fortune with moderation. But there were three things he could not endure.

Babar's first concern after his triumph was, like that of Adam, to plant a garden. With that object in view he crossed the Jumna; but, alas! as he himself says, 'the whole country was so ugly and loathsome that I recrossed the river, filled with unutterable disgust.' However, since Allah had not seen fit to create a better world, the philosophic Padishah resolved to make the best of this, and forthwith covered the detestable district with gardens redolent of roses and resplendent with narcissus flowers, 'planted regularly in beds geometrically corresponding one with another.' Even these efforts, however, failed to

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confer a blessing upon a land essentially and fundamentally damned.

Three things especially disturbed poor Babar's equanimity: 'One was the heat of Hindustan, another the strong winds, and the third its dust.' Here in the good Padishah I recognise a brother, and his woes somewhat alleviate mine. However, the resourceful one proved again equal to the calamity. 'Baths,' he tells us with practical simplicity, 'were the means of removing all three inconveniences.' Here also I gladly confirm Babar's judgment from personal experience.

Leaving my tent, relatively refreshed, I begin to look about for the delectable paradise geometrically planted by my brother-in-sorrow. I consult the excellent Mr. Havell's excellent 'Handbook to Agra,' and I only find that 'the Ram Bagh is one of the gardens laid out either by himself or by one of his nobles, and the Zohra Bagh near it contains the remains of a garden-house, which is said to have belonged to one of Babar's daughters.' This is not satisfactory. Babar is as dead as Pan, and the perfume of his beloved roses only lives in his genial memoirs.

The same funereal reflection applies to the palaces which Babar built, and to the tanks and wells which he sank. They have all melted into darkness; but the east wind continues blowing and clothing the earth in a coat of drought. The last crop was almost ruined for want of rain, and, unless the heavens relent at this eleventh hour, the dumb millions of yonder plain will have cause to lament the water now poured upon these roads to lay the dust for the Prince and Princess of Wales.

With Babar, Agra's glory departed, to return with his grandson Akbar, who brought the Moghul Court back from Delhi, whither it had been driven under his father Humayun by Sher Shah, built this modern city on the right bank of the river, and here spent his declining years in peace.

This was not his first essay in city-building. A twenty-two miles' drive along Akbar's highroad, past many a ruin

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of his reign, brings you to his deserted capital Fatehpur Sikri—a square frame of crenellated walls enclosing a multitude of temples, tombs, and palaces, now all sound asleep, as though under a wicked magician's spell.

I have seen cities that died of old age and cities that met with sudden destruction. Fatehpur Sikri appears to have been still-born. It arose out of the jungle at Akbar's bidding, and at his bidding it was abandoned as soon as finished. And now it is the favourite resort of the leopard, the owl, and the tourist.

As you roam over the empty streets, now halting before a mosque, now entering the courtyards of a palace, and again exploring the apartments wherein Eastern princesses once luxuriated in voluptuous idleness, the question haunts you, Why was this great capital built, and, above all, why was it, in the prime of its magnificence, given up to desolation? Here is a kind of answer, romantic enough to satisfy the rich in faith.

Three hundred and fifty years ago, says the popular historian, there lived a holy man called Sheikh Selim Chisti, who came to this wilderness and made a home unto himself in yonder cave amidst the wild beasts of the jungle, tamed by his sanctity. The hermit's fame for holiness spread by degrees over the land, and reached the ears of the Emperor Akbar, who at that time mourned the death of all his children and the want of an heir to his power. On hearing of the Sheikh, Akbar brought his Empress to this place, in the hope that, perchance, a son might be born unto him by the holy man's intercession. The Sheikh interceded, and in the fulness of time the Empress Mariam gave birth to a son in the hermit's own cave. In the plenitude of his gratitude the pious Akbar founded this city, and invested it with all the strength and splendour of a great capital. This is how Fatehpur Sikri came into being.

Its desertion was also due, says the legend, to the same holy man, who, vexed by the noise of men, said that either he or the Emperor would have to go. The Emperor

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went, and Fatehpur relapsed into silence. But, though its splendour was short-lived, the sanctity of the place still endures. Men and women who scarce remember the power of Akbar continue to repair to the hermit's tomb on the summit of the hill to pray for his intercession with Heaven, leaving behind them pious bribes of many kinds and colours. Here you see the marble fretwork of the saint's tomb adorned with threads tied by women longing for offspring, and elsewhere a horseshoe nailed to the wall by the owner of an ailing beast, and you quit these uncanny courts marvelling at the greatness of the credulity which brought them into existence, at the catholicity of taste which embellished them, and at the godlike capriciousness which doomed them to desolation. Truly Akbar was a great man, and the tokens of his splendid audacity are many in Agra.

His successor, Jahangir, followed in his forerunner's footsteps, and added to the architectural treasures of the city many tombs, temples, and palaces; but most of the works which render Agra the museum of India are due to Shah Jahan—such as the Pearl Mosque, the Great Mosque, and other mosques, all of which were completed by his magnificent extravagance.

Some little time ago I had the pleasure of meeting this interesting Emperor in an Oriental History compiled for another imperial favourite of mine—Ranjit Singh. On the opening page of the manuscript I saw an illuminated picture representing the interview between Shah Jahan and the French traveller François Bernier, who was sent to India by Colbert in the middle of the seventeenth century for purposes of diplomatic intrigue long dead and forgotten, and wrote a book still remembered and even read. In that book the author tells us how he found his Moghul Majesty in the middle of his gorgeous nobles, seated upon a throne of gold and rubies and emeralds and diamonds, clothed in white satin and gold and precious stones, of whose value, however, the cautious diplomat could only form a remote estimate, 'because it is not per-

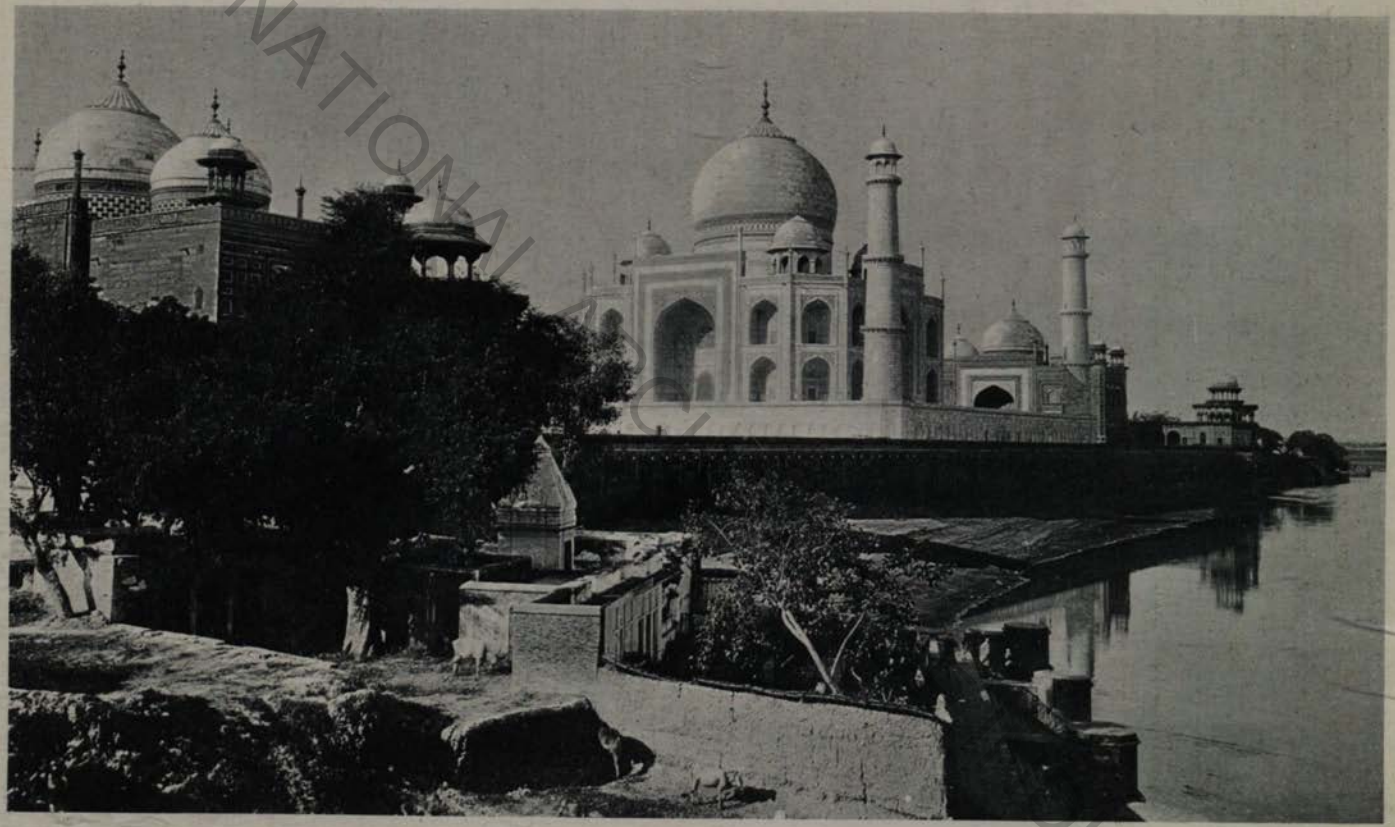
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mitted to come near enough to count them or to judge of their purity'—perhaps a wise prohibition; for the use of distance as a preventive of disenchantment is nowhere better understood or more constantly needed than in the East.

However, Shah Jahan could easily afford to be genuinely, even tastefully, magnificent. He was a patron of the beautiful by right of birth. His Court had for generations been the comfortable resort of artists from Asia and Europe, and in him a whole age of artistic expenditure reached its colophon; a whole age of æsthetic aspiration found its highest expression in that mausoleum of marble which admires its own grace in the waters of the Jumna, when in flood, and which at this moment glares fiercely under the sun of the Agra heavens. It is the monument of Shah Jahan's grief for the loss of his favourite wife Arjumand Banu, 'the Crown of the Palace.' It still stands in all the pride of beauty: its smooth domes and chaste minarets without glancing white through the green tracery of the trees, its marble screens within surrounding the two empty tombs, the crypt below shielding the graves of the Emperor and Empress, still wreathed with blossoms by pious hands, and the vaults above resounding with the voices of many visitors: the native gliding over the marble floors bare-footed, the foreigner gazing at the delicately flowered walls bare-headed—each, after his fashion, paying a tribute of respect to the memory of a lady once beloved and to the exquisite taste of a loyal prince. It is a work perfect of its kind, but it is of a kind which fails to arouse my enthusiasm. It makes me think of Euclid or of a toy-shop. The Taj seems to me to need a glass case.

'Oh, you ought to see it by moonlight!' says my platitudinarian friend. 'Then the harshness of its symmetry is softened and the white domes and walls do not glare as they do now.'

'My dear good fellow, have you ever seen anything, from a factory chimney to a dunghill, that did not look



The Taj Mahal, Agra.

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mysteriously beautiful by moonlight?' I answer, laughing, and he goes away, fuming.

But he is right. The Taj, like everything else that is Eastern, requires for its full appreciation the hazy, sublimating light of the moon—emotional, not to say hysterical, semi-darkness. It cannot bear the merciless scrutiny of mid-day reason—or, at least, this is my opinion. 'If anyone says otherwise—the road is broad.'

This masterpiece of human love and vanity once stood in the middle of a grove of stately palm and solemn cypress—calculated to set off the curves of the domes, the slim minarets, and the sorrow of the grave. It now stands in the middle of an instructive exhibition of European ineptitude. A tardy attempt appears, however, to have been made to restore some of the original harmony by the plantation of an avenue of cypress-trees—still too young to shed over the mausoleum that suggestion of dignified melancholy which the cypress sheds even over the humblest of graveyards throughout the Mahomedan world. The gardener who planted this garden had never roamed over the turbaned tombstones of a Mahomedan city of the dead, and his work, with its tardy recantation, is a flourishing example of that attitude of mind which holds that it is our mission to educate Asia first and to understand her afterwards.

As we walked across the garden on our way out, my friend drew my attention to two small green parrots, chattering as they pecked into the red sandstone of the gateway, crowned by eleven small white domes ranged in a row like so many cheeses on a counter. The parrots, which are as common as sparrows in this country, are supposed to be endowed with dreadfully long memories, and, as this pair chattered aloft, it seemed to tell me of the thousands of men and women who for seventeen long years laboured in the construction of this monument of Shah Jahan's sensibility, sustained by a daily dole of corn, carefully reduced to the minimum compatible with life—or even beyond, for, if the parrots chatter truly, the

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mortality among the Emperor's labouring subjects could not have been more terrible had they been deliberately offered as a funeral sacrifice to the spirit of his beautiful wife.

But enough of the dead, princes and peasants alike; they have all gone the way of Babar's roses and melons. Here is the city of the living. It appears to be in course of construction or of demolition. But it is neither the one nor the other. It is simply, like every other city of the East, topsy-turvy. I wander through its streets fearing at every step lest the rickety balconies should fall down upon my head. The inhabitants seem to share my sense of insecurity, though their fears arise from totally different sources. I observe over many a small door—fastened to the lintel by a heavy chain and padlock—either a red hand with fingers outstretched painted on the whitewashed wall, or an image of the elephant-god Ganesh, three-eyed, snake-necklaced, altogether interesting. The red hand is a powerful talisman against the Evil Eye, and the god, of course, an even more powerful protector against all witchery and a bringer of prosperity; and both are characteristic of Hindustan. For, though the crescent of Islam glitters on all the great monuments of Agra, the Mahomedan population is as a drop in the ocean of Hinduism. But the latter boasts no conspicuous temples. On the other hand, every house contains within its enclosure a chorus of images, and the richer among them even shrines of considerable size and splendour.

There is, for example, the wealthy banker Mr. Something-Something-Something Lal. He dwells in a great mansion, whither he loves to invite the European traveller. And when the European traveller accepts the invitation, he is ushered into a spacious room, furnished with chairs on which he fears to sit, and is offered fruit and refreshments which he is unable to eat. But the host means exceedingly well, and, if his taste in upholstery is execrable, his family chapel is gorgeous. In it are enshrined his private gods—in number one hundred and sixty.

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But, as usual, this affluence is limited to the few. The two hundred thousand souls that swarm in the streets and bazaars appear to find life a thing that is to be borne with fortitude and to be relinquished without regret. There are among them women in blue petticoats and red or yellow cloaks, all ragged, carrying on their heads baskets of dung or pitchers of water. Small children, dressed in a waistband and a string of amulets, sprawl in the dust, some carrying even smaller children in their arms, others drinking from the gutter. Here and there, outside the miserable dwellings, old men, nearly naked, lie on rope bedsteads, trying to warm their shrivelled bodies in the sun. Here and there fowls are picking up what food they can find in the sand. As you wander towards the bazaar all things grow in density and variety, and the place is perilous with importunate touts, with men riding on bullocks, with beggars, cripples, camels, cows, geese, and tourists. On the counters of the shops sit the traders, their brows anointed with marks of holiness, their eyes keen with greed. Amidst these is an establishment which bears the inscription, 'GODHELP & Co.'—apparently, God help the clients. From the awnings of many of the shops hangs a cage, and in it is an ancient green parrot, winking knowingly at trader and customer impartially. He seems to say:

> 'Some for the Glories of This World, and some
> Sigh for the Prophet's Paradise to come;
> Ah, take the Cash and let the Credit go,
> Nor heed the rumble of a distant Drum!'

And on many a wall I read advertisements of typewriters, phonographs, dentists, pleaders, 'ophthalmic opticians,' and, as I begin to imagine that the Middle Age is dead, I come in sight of the establishment of an astrologer. He is, of course, a Brahman in caste, and in appearance an amiable, slimy creature, overfed and, I hear, slightly overmarried. He sits behind a table, wrapt in Manchester calico and Eastern courtesy, with many a

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glossy elf-lock cork-screwing down his round shoulders. He is a character to be studied and even envied.

The astrologer still is in India what he was in medieval Europe—an indispensable member of the body social. He is far better paid than the physician, far more highly esteemed than the priest, and far more earnestly feared than the policeman. When an Indian child is born into this transmigration, the parents are more anxious to have its earthly career predicted by a horoscope than Christian parents are to have the heavenly future of theirs assured by baptism. When an Indian wants a wife—and when does he not?—he looks as carefully into her nativity as into her dowry. When he has lost his cash-box he runs, not to the detective, but to the astrologer. When he has lost his cow, he does not try to recover her by the vulgar offer of a reward, but he goes to the astrologer. When he has lost his wife and may wish to recover her he likewise goes to the astrologer.

My friend's shop is like an ancient Greek oracle—a spring of counsel, abundant and discreet, for all mortals in doubt and in distress. To him come all who are anxious that suffering friends may recover, absent relatives return home in safety, or the barren rejoice in offspring. To him also come, as to a celestial solicitor, all who wish to embark upon a new enterprise under favourable auspices. When his prophecies have been falsified by the event, his incantations have proved futile, his herbs and his prayers abortive—as sometimes happens—neither is his self-confidence abashed nor his client's faith shaken. He consoles the disappointed with the all-sufficient reflection: 'Thou seest, my friend, how true it is that we live in the iron age; even the rites of a Brahman have lost the efficacy which they possessed in the golden age.' And the client goes away and comes back again. No wonder my friend is so sleek, so smiling, so knowing, so prosperous! I must advise him to inscribe over his premises *Sunt commercia cœli*. The inscription will be unintelligible to his clients, and, consequently, all the

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more impressive and attractive. Not that he needs any auxiliary attraction. He informs me that even European ladies and gentlemen of all ranks disdain not his services and prophecies. His purse, could it be investigated by profane eyes, would supply a curious link between East and West. In its depths the Hindu's humble copper would be found in friendly converse with the haughty Sahib's silver. Thus one touch of credulity reveals the whole world kin, and those who are severed in prejudice are proved brethren in stupidity.

But I forgot the astrologer's most important public function. There are seasons in the Hindu year when the village streets resound with the dull thunder of the tom-tom, and the air, from dawn till dark and after, is full of the dolorous strains of the reed-flute. Behind this terrible band marches a procession of bronze-skinned females in bright white draperies edged with red, their limbs laden with silver and brass, while above the veiled heads rises the scarlet and gold canopy under which may be seen the bridegroom borne aloft on the shoulders of rhythmically groaning palki-wallas. He is a precocious youth of some eleven summers, clad in scarlet and gold, with a conical cap on his head and decently bedaubed brow, sitting cross-legged with all the nonchalance of one to whom getting married is an everyday experience. The bride also, despite an impotent Act to the contrary, is a young lady of perhaps nine or ten years. But she, alas! shall never know more than one wedding-day.

You feel in a nuptial atmosphere. One half of the population seems grimly determined to wed the other half, and hundreds of men and maidens are daily cut off in the prime of youth by matrimony. The peasant, it is true, will rush where the prince is afraid to tread. That is his nature the world over. But this is an exhibition of matrimonial ardour unparalleled in the visitor's experience. On inquiry it turns out that the astrologers have pronounced the stars at the present moment especially propitious to the propagation of the species. Furthermore,

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the same oracles have predicted that no stellar combination favourable to wedlock will occur for fourteen long months, and in India fourteen months is a period pregnant with disastrous possibilities. Therefore 'now or never' is the word. 'Let us marry and be merry, for to-morrow we may be swept off by plague or famine.' And the astrologer smiles upon his work, secretly thanking the Giver of all blessings for having peopled the heavens with stars and the earth with fools.

Surfeited with wisdom and dust, I try to find my way out into the clear air, and, in so doing, I pass many a curious building—here a Roman Catholic Church, there a Protestant missionary school, a hospital, an orphanage, a college, a gaol, and a lunatic asylum—all appearing to say to the crumbling tombs of the Moghuls yonder: 'You have had your day; it is now our turn.' I do not mean to imply that the influence of the West over Agra is a new thing, though its supremacy is. In the old cemeteries you find the tombs wherein sleeps the dust of many a European adventurer of the Moghul period. Some of these strangers were traders, and others artists or apostles; some were famous in their day and others infamous. It was the golden age of adventure in India: that period when the Moghul Empire was dying and a multitude of carrion-crows—Mahomedan, Mahratta, Sikh, and Frank—were fighting for a bite at the prostrate body. To cavaliers of fortune the prospect was tempting, and they came in great flights.

Among these was M. Walter Reinhardt, better known by the picturesque appellation of Samru, which this adventurous Frenchman assumed along with the turban of Islam. He was a native of Trèves, a butcher by trade as well as by temperament, and otherwise an unlimited miscreant. Wearied of the slaughter of brutes, he joined the French army, and on arriving in India deserted his colours, enlisted under those of the East India Company, where he attained the rank of sergeant, deserted them, and entered the service of the Moghul Nawab of Bengal,

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THE CITY, COUNTRY AND PRINCE'S CAMP, AGRA.

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the Company's ruthless enemy. From that date Walter Reinhardt vanishes and reappears as Samru, which is supposed to be the Indian version of his descriptive nickname Sombre, or, more probably, of the English surname Summers, which the versatile knight of the slaughter-house had adopted on occasion.

The Nawab found the gloomy Samru useful in the capture of the British factory of Patna in 1763, and in the ensuing massacre of the inmates. It is said that, the native officers having refused to carry out the inhuman order, Samru volunteered to do the work for the love of it. Tradition adds the touch that he despatched on that day with his own hand some hundred and fifty fellow-European men, women, and children. Next year he played a leading part in a similar performance at Agra.

Samru was already a great man and the husband of a great woman—the Mahomedan lady known to fame as the Begum *par excellence*, on whose behalf Samru had abandoned another Mahomedan wife. The Begum accompanied her partner in all his missions of terror until his death, which occurred here in Agra in 1778.

In that year Walter Reinhardt, *alias* Summers, Sombre, or Samru, died full of years, riches, and honours, and was succeeded in the Begum's ancient affection by another French knight-errant, Le Vaisseau, who married her properly after her conversion to the Roman Catholic faith. But, strange to say, baptism failed to change the Begum's character. Le Vaisseau was too good a gentleman to be popular among his consort's military ruffians. Things reached such a pass that the pair resolved to flee from their own loyal forces, and carried their resolve out, after having bound each other by a romantic pledge to die rather than fall into their enemies' hands.

They fled on a dark night towards the nearest British camp, the knight on horseback, the lady in a palanquin. Their deserted troops got wind of the matter and gave chase. Nearer and nearer they drew. Suddenly through the darkness the knight heard the Begum's maid cry out

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that her ladyship had killed herself. Leaping down from his horse, the poor Le Vaisseau peeped into the palanquin, and there, sure enough, beheld his dear old wife lying in a pool of blood which issued from her breast. Whereupon, like the true and loyal gentleman that he was, he whipped out his pistol and shot himself.

The Begum, however, soon recovered from the scratch she had given herself, returned to her throne, and sought consolation for the loss of her husband in a careful management of her other worldly possessions. In this she succeeded wonderfully well, thanks to an alliance with the East India Company, under whose fostering wings she grew in wealth and holiness, founded and endowed many Catholic churches, encouraged Christian missions, both Catholic and Protestant, with impartial liberality, entertained at her table Governors, Generals, Governor-Generals, and other great ones of the earth, and, having accomplished a century, died in 1836, leaving behind her the reputation of a pious and charitable lady with a head screwed shrewdly on her shoulders.

But the days of doughty deeds, of fortunes rapid and sordid, and of fatal intrigues with pious and versatile Begums, are over. India no longer is an oyster to be opened by the knight-errant's sword. Moreover, the pearls with which the oyster was once credited have, like other Eastern myths, long since been reduced to their real dimensions. There may be wealth in the tourist's 'gorgeous East,' but it is locked up in the coffers of the few. The children of India, as I have seen them day after day for many a weary week past, are lamentably poor, and it must have been a very poor set of knights indeed who ever found it worth their while to rob them. The oyster lies open before my eyes, and, behold, it is full of emptiness. But, for my part, I regret not the romantic days of old. I even prefer the picture of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh which I find in the official reports of the present. It is a picture undistinguished by startling adventure or serious calamity,

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except such as are due to the cruelty of the heavens. Sometimes the monsoon, on which the life of the peasant depends, is small, or the rainfall is unevenly distributed. Then there is sale of brass utensils, and hunger. But all that man can do is done to prevent or to alleviate the horrors of famine. The depredations of bipeds of prey are also restricted within such limits as are possible in a land only just awakening to the discovery that the spoliation of the weak by the strong is not an inevitable law of society.

The vicinity of the Native States—those high-schools of smugglers, coiners, and other artists in lawlessness—renders the task of maintaining order even more difficult. Thus one night a few weeks ago the village of Jagner, not very far from Agra, was invaded by a band of one hundred brigands, who, after having attacked the police-station, were finally routed by the combined forces of the Government and the villagers, and fled across the border, leaving behind them one prisoner. In the city of Agra itself the other night there was a similar conflict on a smaller scale, and when I heard of it the small size of the doors and their chains and padlocks assumed new significance in my eyes. But what are these incidents compared with the good old times to which they have succeeded?

Yes, this is the new era. The bureaucratic machine works on, from year's end to year's end, grinding comparative order out of unmitigated chaos, comparative prosperity out of starvation, twilight out of utter darkness, and yet failing to earn the love of the people on whose behalf it works. Why? I suppose for the same reason for which the Briton fails to earn the love of anyone the world over. It is a cumbrous kind of machine, almost Turkishly stupid and slow and self-complacent. Yet, in the main, an honest and, if unamiable, a beneficent old machine.

But what of the wheels? Most of them, no doubt, rumble on smoothly enough, happy in doing the day's

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work for the day's wages, unhaunted by memories, unharassed by anticipations other than the anticipation of a Commissionership, a provincial Lieutenant-Governorship, a star, or, at the worst, a comfortable pension of £1,000 a year. Duty is their favourite word, doubt their abhorrence, self-admiration their most amusing quality. They are happy in feeling what they are—infinitesimal wheels in one infinitely big machine.

It is a very bucolic existence, that of the ordinary British Civilian in India—an Elysium of sunlight and strenuous officiousness, with an occasional shade which does not obscure the sunlight, but brings it into relief. It is only when a man of genius strays into the Indian Government jungle that the tragedy arises. Fortunately, men of genius are not very common in India.

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CHAPTER XIV

CHRISTMAS IN GWALIOR

My platitudinarian friend's hyperboles have at last acquired some meaning. Here, indeed, in this great Mahratta State of the Sindhias I catch a glimpse of 'Oriental magnificence,' and here is the bulk and the brilliance of the moving mountains which men call elephants. Thirty-six of these imperial beasts tower in a row outside the station under the fort-crowned cliffs of Gwalior, their trunks and foreheads gorgeous with floral and geometrical patterns in blue, red, yellow, and white, their bodies all but hidden beneath their priceless trappings. The first two bear on their trunks the Prince of Wales's plumes and motto painted in blue and white, and their superior splendour indicates that they are intended for the royal guests. They are clothed in red velvet *jhools* richly embroidered with gold. Their necks are encircled in immense necklaces of gold. From their ears dangle gigantic tassels of gold, and mats of gold chain glitter over their foreheads. Two golden *howdahs* are fastened to their backs, and across each neck sits a richly-dressed *mahout*, a fly-whisk of peacock feathers in one hand and a prod of gold in the other.

The ceremonies of reception and presentation over, the elephants advance, the bells suspended from their flanks ringing solemnly. They kneel down, a gangway is fixed from the platform to the *howdahs*, and the Prince of Wales steps up to one of them, accompanied by the Maharaja; on the other ascends the Princess, accompanied by the Agent to the Governor-General. Behind

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each sits an attendant in scarlet and gold, holding over the riders' heads an open umbrella of like material and colour. This pair is followed by ten more elephants, carrying their Royal Highnesses' suite. They are all caparisoned as the first, with the exception that gold is here replaced by silver. The remaining twenty-four carry the noblemen of the Gwalior State, arrayed in all the merry tints of a garden in spring.

The procession moves off; at the head rides the Inspector-General of Police, followed by a native band of drums and reed-flutes. Then come five elephants carrying the emblems of the State, and one clothed in gold is led empty. To these ensue a great number of led horses, richly caparisoned and plumed. Then come two varieties of palanquins—*palkis* and *nalkis*—empty, but sparkling with velvet and gold, followed by a number of mounted staff officers. Next to them comes a cavalry band, one battery of the Gwalior Horse Artillery, one squadron of cavalry, one troop of cavalry, then a second native band, followed by spearmen on foot, under the command of feudal cavaliers, beside each of whom trots a pedestrian holding aloft an open umbrella. These bodies are repeated, forming the advance-guard, and behind them sways heavily the line of elephants already described, the procession closing in a rear-guard constituted of modern cavalry and artillery and medieval infantry, and above them all floats the yellow banner of the Sindhias, with its coil of hissing cobras.

The roads through which we pass are lined partly by Imperial Service troops and partly by the Maharaja's quaint sowars and sardars armed with spears and shields, a retainer holding over the head of each mounted nobleman an umbrella attached to a long stick. The same mixture of the old and the new is heard in the combination of tom-toms and reed-flutes with the cavalry bands, and is also seen in the great palace where the procession has just arrived, the older portions being in the Saracenic, the more recent additions in Dorico-Italian style, all

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flashing spotlessly white in the sunlight, amidst a park of rich green and under a sky of limpid blue. But, strangely enough, in this case incongruity does not beget discord. His Highness of Gwalior has discovered the secret of being grand without being gaudy; in his magnificence Western taste is wonderfully reconciled with Asiatic pomp, and, as my platitudinarian friend would have said, 'words fail me,' etc.

It is all the more amazing when I consider that the ruler of this State is a comparatively new man. He is the descendant of a certain Ranoji Sindhia, the son of a village headman, who began life in the eighteenth century as slipper-bearer to Belaji Peshwa and ended by founding this Mahratta dynasty, which still reigns over a kingdom larger and richer than Scotland. A glorious hero was Sindhia, for his success forbids me to call him an adventurer. But greater even than the slipper-bearer Ranoji was his son and successor Mahadaji, who was amongst the last to quit the fatal field of Panipat, and who, taught by disasters and the lessons of French and English soldiers of fortune, took Agra and Koil and Delhi, and her Emperor and many other things, before he took Gwalior.

The posterity of one of those European tutors of the Sindhias still lives here—a clan of Italian extraction, preserving their national features and the favour of the princes of Gwalior unaltered. I saw the head of the family, Colonel Sir Michael Filose, K.S.S., Chief Secretary, a venerable Italian gentleman in white beard and black frock-coat, among the twelve gorgeous sardars of the State, tendering his tribute of submission to the Prince of Wales in the durbar. Later on I met other members of the family, all high State officials, and one of them obliged me with a history of his house. The founder arrived in Calcutta about 1770, and made the acquaintance of a Frenchman named La Fontaine, who filled a high office under Ali Gohm, the titular Emperor of Delhi, and held out to his Italian acquaintance high hopes of military

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and other distinction if he followed him. Michael Filose accepted the offer, and found employment under the Nawab of Oudh. About that time the Maharaja Sindhia was recruiting a force, trained after the European manner under another Italian officer, and Michael Filose joined this force. He was given the command of a regiment, which he gradually raised into a brigade, followed the Maharaja through his adventurous career, and shared his final success. Since then the descendants of the Italian and the Mahratta have jointly ruled Gwalior for more than a century, and have both combined to render the Prince's visit a brilliant success.

To be perfectly frank, my enthusiasm, I suspect, is not quite disinterested—whose ever is? When, after the durbars and banquets, I began to collect my own feelings calmly and to sort them out according to the strictest methods of the morbid self-dissecting pedantry called psychological analysis, I found that a fair proportion of my æsthetic satisfaction sprang from no nobler source than personal comfort. The Maharaja has provided his guests with everything that could be demanded by the most exacting Sardanapalus. In my tent I find all I need—from a bath and eau de Cologne to a pin; and outside the tent all that I may need—from an Indian elephant to a European hair-dresser.

I took an early opportunity of mounting the first. I had heard from my lady friends that riding on an elephant meant dignified exaltation, tempered by the sobering effects of sea-sickness. A male friend had described the *howdah* as a tolerable imitation of a dentist's chair. I cannot adopt either formula for my own sensations. Having alighted from my carriage at the foot of the Fort, I was met by an elderly gentlemen in red, who, pointing to a ridge of fifteen elephants ranged against one side of the courtyard, gave me to understand that I was at liberty to choose my own mountain. For a while I gazed at the range of gaily-dressed flesh, endeavouring to conceal my embarrassment. Suddenly one of the brutes extended

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PROCESSION FROM THE STATION TO THE PALACE, GWALIOR.

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his trunk towards me. I took it to be a friendly hint, such as a certain enchanted animal once gave to a certain prince in a certain fairy story, the name of which I forget. In that case the hint saved the prince's neck; in the present instance it very nearly broke mine.

The animal knelt down, a ladder was planted against its side, I mounted and took my seat on the *howdah*, and, in due course, we were under way. We passed beneath one lofty gateway, and jogged slowly up the road which leads to the rocky plateau of the fortress. We presently passed beneath a second gateway, and proceeded higher up the road, when the elephant thought the time had come to prove that he was not utterly devoid of a kind of humour. He suddenly stood still and then staggered round. The *mahout* began to coax him with the words —if words they be—'*Tay, tay*,' '*Ow, ow*.' But the elephant remained obdurate. The *mahout* raised his voice in blasphemy, and began to play with his iron grapples on the brute's ears and neck. Then the elephant lifted up his trunk in anger, rumbling, roaring, and shaking like a volcano in travail. This earthquake had lasted for some five minutes, when I thought I might be more comfortable on foot, and, getting the elephant alongside of the ramparts, I dismounted and walked up to the summit of the Fort.

It is a great oblong platform of sandstone rock, yellow by nature, but gray with age, dropping almost perpendicular on every side, and, where Nature left her work incomplete, the face of the cliff is artificially scarped, the whole being surrounded by thick battlemented walls. Everything speaks of impregnable strength, and the numerous peepul and neem trees which grow from the crevices reveal the presence of wells and tanks. But even more impressive than these resources of the place are its religious ornaments. Both within and without, the face of the cliff is honeycombed with caves patiently cut out of the living rock, some of them large enough to have once accommodated many frugal anchorites, others mere niches intended

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for the accommodation of even more easily satisfied images. According to the inscriptions, the whole of this weird colony of deserted cells was excavated wholesale in thirty-three years towards the end of the fifteenth century. One of them contains a monstrous statue 57 feet in height, and they all appear to owe their origin to a sudden epidemic of Jain otherworldliness. Curiously enough, the Mahomedan conqueror here seems to have spared the faces of the vanquished gods—quite undeservedly, for the sculptures, to my eye, are remarkable only for their colossal size, but otherwise their authors appear to have taken for their models dolls made of wood. Most of them are pious parodies of Adinath, the first Jain pontiff, and here and there the walls and pillars of the caves are covered with rows upon rows of small cross-legged Buddhas, ranged stiffly like so many toy figures on the shelves of a shop.

Less startling are the ruined palaces and temples of which this ancient capital is full. One of the former shoots up from the very edge of the cliff, its pallid face consisting of a number of low stories intersected by semicircular towers, whose open domes are joined by fretted screens and adorned with friezes of bright blue tiles with yellow elephants inlaid in them. One of these blue belts bears a number of yellow ducks stepping comically in procession. I enter this palace of the past and wander over two ruined courtyards, surrounded by low doors leading into small rooms, whose walls and pillars and ceilings are all of the pale sandstone of the cliff, and which seem to have been recently used as stables. The history of this rocky capital bears out the suggestion of strength conveyed by its position. It has sustained many a siege, and it has known again and again the sorrows of storm and starvation.

Built more than twelve hundred years ago by a raja of the neighbourhood, the fortress proved strong enough to resist, two and a half centuries later, the attacks of Mahmud of Ghazni, though it succumbed in 1196 to another Mahmud. Here began the long tale of blood which these grim rocks could tell. Fifteen years afterwards

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the Mahomedans lost Gwalior, but recovered it in 1231, after a blockade of twelve months, conducted by Shams-ud-din (the 'Sun of the Faith'), Sultan of Delhi. Then in 1398 came the fierce Tamerlane, like a mountain stream from the north, and in the ensuing cataclysm Narsin Rai, a Hindu chieftain, succeeded in seizing Gwalior and saving it for Hinduism until 1519, when the Mahomedans, under Ibrahim Lodi, the Pathan King of Delhi, once more gained possession, to lose it six years later to the superior cunning of the Emperor Babar, whom I left eating melons and quaffing the various joys of life in the gardens of Agra. But even Babar's inventive genius could not arrest the whirling wheel to which this Fort seems to have been fastened by a merry demon. His son Humayun was in 1543 expelled by Sher Shah. But when in 1555, by falling from a staircase in his palace at Delhi, Humayun brought his luckless reign to an end, his great son and successor Akbar promptly recovered Gwalior and turned it into a prison, where captives of rank were permitted to pine in luxury.

When the Delhi Empire was dismembered, the Gwalior limb was seized, first by Jat Rana of Gohad, then by Sindhia, from whose grasp it was wrested by the East India Company in 1780, and transferred to its former owner, to be wrested back again by Sindhia in 1784, from whose successor it was once more wrested by the British in 1803, and restored again in 1805. After Sindhia's death, in 1827, the Fort was ruled by his widow till 1833, when her adopted son Janakji assumed the reins of government, and ten years later died heirless, thus affording an opportunity to his uncle and an adopted relative of his widow to fight for this everlasting bone of contention—a struggle interrupted by the British forces, which met and routed the Mahratta troops a few miles off on December 29, 1843, and, having taken possession of the Fort, reduced the Gwalior army to harmless dimensions, and exacted an indemnity and an annual provision of £180,000 for the maintenance of a garrison. Fourteen years later

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the bone was very nearly wrested from the claws of the British lion by the Mutiny, in which the Gwalior troops saw an opportunity for reasserting themselves, though the young Maharaja courageously preferred his loyalty to the foreign rulers. This compelled him to flee to Agra, whence he was brought back in triumph a few months after by Sir Hugh Rose.

This, so far, is the last adventure of the bone. The young Maharaja, reinstated by the British Government, was rewarded for his fidelity with the right of adoption, with additional lands, yielding £30,000 a year, was made a General in the British Army, a Knight Grand Cross of the Bath, and a Knight Grand Commander of the Star of India. And when the present King visited India, thirty years ago, he found no warmer reception than in Gwalior. The Maharaja parted from his guest with words which are often quoted: 'It has been much to see your face,' he said; 'I can hardly hope to see you again, but sometimes in England turn a kind thought on me. All I have is yours.' His successor has inherited all these good things and sentiments. He is, perhaps, the most energetic Native Prince that ever enjoyed a twenty-one gun salute. Furthermore, he is a good soldier, and rendered some service in the Peking Expedition, when he, an Oriental, assisted in the sack of an Oriental city by the barbarians of the West.

I could not help reflecting on these matters as I leaned over the ramparts of the lofty fortress, gazing down upon the old town—a mass of stone houses roofed with flat slates, once the home of the Jain cult, which is now represented by the crumbling ruins of a solitary temple known as San Bahu. The sun was setting, and the shadow of the cliff lay upon the town below as I looked into its streets, listening to the voices of the children, the bleating of the goats, and the sing-song of the sweet-sellers, all subdued into harmony by distance. Beyond stretches the dry plain, and over it circle the kites, squealing shrilly. Ever and anon one of them swoops

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down, picks up his filth, and then soars up again on pinions strong, swift, sure, and noiseless. Further off twinkle the first lights of the palace, and the white tents in the park gleam between the trees through the gloaming. I walk to the first gateway, and there I find another elephant waiting for me. Unwilling to disappoint the elderly gentleman in red, I consent to be jogged down the steep road to the bottom courtyard, where I exchange my dentist's chair for the less exalted and infinitely more comfortable carriage.

Among the many amusements provided by the Maharaja for the entertainment of his royal guests during the Christmas week spent with him were a review of his forces and three tiger-shoots. In the review took part all the troops and guns which had graced the triumphal entry, and, whatever may be thought of their efficiency on a serious field of action, they looked very brave on the parade-ground, as they marched, trotted, and galloped past the Prince: cavalry, infantry, horse artillery, and four elephant batteries. The Maharaja is prodigiously proud of his army, and has often expressed the wish that an opportunity might be given him of proving the mettle of the Mahratta soldier under modern conditions in the service of the Empire. For my part I am too conscious of my limitations to hazard a prayer either that His Highness's wish may be speedily fulfilled or that the opportunity for which he longs may be indefinitely postponed.

My military adviser tells me that it is absurd to judge of the efficiency of the troops of the Native States, altogether amounting to some ninety thousand, by the standard of European armies. He admits that, measured by such a standard, they may be perfectly useless for all purposes except that of display. But, on the other hand, he asks, how could they be better? The Government of India has bound the Native States to limit their troops to the number needed for the maintenance of the dignity of the chief, for the enforcement of internal order, and for the

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fulfilment of the special obligations entered into with the paramount Power, which, on its part, undertakes to defend the Native States against foreign aggression. That being so, if the armies of the Native States are called upon to fight at all, they will have to fight against opponents in no way superior to them in military training.

Besides, the limitations imposed upon the Indian princes in the matter of military reform are mainly responsible for the inefficiency of their troops. No State is allowed to enlist in its army any resident of foreign territory, and it can only recruit troops from its own population. The Native States cannot communicate with one another or compare notes in military matters. They are not to equip, or use for military purposes, or even repair, forts and fortifications within their territory. They are not permitted to manufacture arms or ammunition, or to traffic in them. They cannot introduce improvements into their armies by means of foreign expert assistance or advice.

Allowances, also, should be made for the temperament and special circumstances of individual princes. The Maharaja Sindhia, for example, is spoiling for a fight. But other princes whom I have met did not seem to me to suffer from the same complaint. Even the most blatant of imperialists has recently admitted that 'some do not take any direct interest in military matters, and have honest and deep-rooted objections to reformed troops and a traditional love for the old-fashioned retainers, whom we regard as an expensive and detrimental mob.' 'Why should they not?' asks my friend again.

I regret I cannot speak more enthusiastically of the tiger-shooting either. The Prince of Wales is acknowledged to be a good shot. But the manner in which these royal sports are organized precludes any opportunity for the exercise of those qualities which, in my judgment, form the only excuse for sportful bloodshed. The tigers were for weeks past watched in the thinly-covered waste which, in this part of Gwalior, passes for jungle, and

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were carefully fed. So the first requisite of real sport—seeking for your own game—was eliminated. Equal care was taken to eliminate the second—danger. Towers were erected on the spots where the shooting was to take place, and were furnished like drawing-rooms. The kill was tied in the immediate neighbourhood of those towers; all possibilities of disturbing the poor brute, thus lured to its doom, were carefully avoided by the use of noiseless slippers and subdued colours, and all the Prince had to do was to wait in his drawing-room, rifle in hand. When the tiger, driven in by the beaters, came within seventy yards of the rifle, the rifle went off and the tiger went down. Whatever that may be, I cannot call it heroic. Nor can I call it amusing.

Besides, there is no earthly reason why the tigers should be destroyed. They never attack human beings so long as they can obtain a respectable animal. It is only when wounded by man that a tiger condescends to attack him; and it is only when famishing that it forgets itself so far as to feed on his flesh.

But the Maharaja in his zeal does not even pretend to be actuated by consideration for his subjects' safety. When the first day's expedition proved less successful than he had hoped, he swore a mighty oath that, if the beaters did not do better on the second day, he would have them hanged. Nor did his tone encourage the suspicion that he was jesting. Again, the man who patronizes hospitals, colleges, and railways, is also now importing from Mombasa lions, which he means to turn loose upon his dominions, so as to enhance their sporting reputation. This is, I suppose, what he means by developing the resources of the country.

As for its other resources, he has an unconquerable antipathy to steam-pumps. The result is that, as soon as the Prince's visit is over, he will have to cast about for the means of rescuing his taxpayers from the fangs of the famine which threatens them. As I moved from one place of amusement to another, I could not but see that

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all the rivers and tanks, both in the country around and in the park of the palace itself, were as dry as if they had never contained any moisture. The few wells here and there are the only sources of the water so lavishly poured upon the roads in order to make them passable for the royal visitors and their motor-cars. When I commented to His Highness on these matters delicately, he smilingly told me that 'famine is an everyday occurrence, while the Prince's visit is an event unique of its kind.' *Ergo*, the money which might be spent in sinking new wells and saving the lives of the peasantry is squandered on the amusement of the princes. The Maharaja of Jaipur, whom our host seems to be bent on outshining, was sensible enough to curtail the pageantry and to devote a portion of the funds to the alleviation of his subjects' misery. And, I believe, no one appreciated the wisdom of this act more highly than the Prince of Wales himself. But tastes differ.

In spite of personal gratitude, my duty as an impersonal chronicler compels me reluctantly to express the suspicion that, in the case of the Maharaja Sindhia, the ideas of Western civilization have not really penetrated far below the surface. His State also, in spite of its Dorico-Italian palace, its electric light, and its college, is essentially uncivilized. The northern parts, covering some six thousand square miles, form a plain of unbroken unpicturesqueness. The southern parts, three times as large, rise 1,500 feet above the sea-level, and are dotted with hills which attain the pretentious height of 2,000 feet. These rugged highlands are clothed with teak forests, in which dwell many curious and caconymous aboriginal tribes—Minas, Sharias, Bhils, Bhilalas, Ghonds, Korkus—men who know not the use of the plough or the colour of money, but obtain the necessaries of life from the produce of the jungle and its primitive luxuries, by bartering that produce to the less barbarous peasants of the lowlands. When the fit for culture seizes them, then these rude sons of the forest take up their axes,

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fell a number of trees, burn the stumps out, and on the patch thus cleared they raise one or, at most, two crops. If by that time their agricultural zeal has not burnt itself out, they abandon these rude fields for new ones, similarly prepared by the simple method known as *jhuming*.

India still is in a large measure a land where every man is free to destroy. This privilege is, of course, extended to the cattle which roam over the countryside, picking up what has escaped the wasteful hand of man. Thanks to this freedom, the Old Resident confidently anticipates that in a few years all marketable timber will disappear from the Gwalior State, as it has disappeared from so many other Native States. As it is, the eye is at every turn met by crooked, maimed, and stunted trunks—the wretched remnants and reminders of once noble forests. And this sight, coupled with the parched look of the fields, detracts considerably from my enthusiasm.

The Maharaja told us the other evening that his simple-minded subjects firmly believe that the presence of the royal guests will propitiate the powers of rain. I fervently hope that it may be so. But my hopes would derive a certain encouragement from the sight of more wells and trees. There is no harm in making assurance doubly sure, as said the priest who, after having vigorously exorcised the rats off a certain ship, advised the captain to supply it with a few cats.

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CHAPTER XV

OUDH AND ITS CAPITAL

A SLOW journey, enlivened by some discomfort, has brought us from Gwalior to Oudh—from a kingdom that is to one that was. The country is as flat as a billiard-table, and in happier years, the Old Resident assures me, almost as green, for the soil, as the numerous trees testify, is not sterile. But at this hour the fields are baked into barrenness, the canals are caked into clay, and the leaves of the trees are gray with the dust. A few groups of peasants and a few herds of dilapidated cattle can be seen moving over the haggard face of the land, and a rare hay-stack or corn-rick stands here and there, a melancholy witness of the might-have-been.

The saddest spots in this exhibition of sadness are, strange to say, in the proximity of the rivers which flow lazily across broad tracts of sand known as *churs*. Now and again the eye rests on a hamlet, whose dishevelled gray thatches supply a commentary on these features of the country, and some insight into the economic condition of its inhabitants. The bulk of them are tenants to the great talukdars, or landlords, and deeply in debt to them. Others are freehold yeomen, and deeply in debt to the money-lenders. 'The rate of interest often amounts to 100 per cent.,' says the Old Resident. It is natural that it should be so in a country where capital is scarce, where the borrowers are many and needy, the lenders few and greedy, and the two classes are impelled to deal with each other by the strongest of human motives—self-preservation and the hope of speedy enrichment.

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'Yes,' admits my friend, 'it is quite natural—so is every disease.'

He proceeds to inform me that the provincial Government has recently made an effort to cure the Oudh farmers of their chronic embarrassments by means of two legislative recipes—the Encumbered Estates Act and the Land Alienation Act. Under the former the Government undertakes to lend money for the payments of old debts, while the other is intended to restrict the incurrence of fresh liabilities. It is a well-meant effort, but the Old Resident is somewhat sceptical as to its success. He points out that the first result has hitherto been a contraction of credit.

'The money-lenders,' he says, 'no longer able to secure themselves by mortgage, now insist on the deposit of the women's silver ornaments, or, if such ornaments are not forthcoming, they demand that the collection of rents should be left in their own hands. So the farmer who is no longer allowed to pawn his farm has to pawn either his wife's jewellery or his crop.'

This does not seem to me a very great step towards the millennium.

The Old Resident, however, who is an open-minded person, and at this moment in a somewhat optimistic mood, maintains that the curtailment of the farmer's freedom to ruin himself is not a bad thing in itself, provided it does not prevent him from obtaining seed for his fields and food for himself and family while the crops are in the ground.

It is instructive to compare the lot of the rural population in Native States with that of British India. In the former loans are hard to obtain, and indebtedness is consequently a rare luxury. In British territory the cultivators are eternally in the money-lenders' books and in litigation with them. This means, I suppose, that in the Native States the peasant starves instantaneously, in British India gradually.

Whether the two recipes tried by the local Government

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will mend matters still remains to be seen. Meanwhile, they have produced an unforeseen effect upon the social life of the patients. The difficulty of obtaining loans has pruned weddings and other ceremonies of that ruinous extravagance which is prescribed by Indian tradition and denounced by Indian reformers. It has also induced the peasantry to postpone the marriage of their children until the advanced age of six or even seven.

This is a change which, if persisted in, will solve one of the biggest knots in the tangle of Indian life, for, apart from other interesting evils which flow from the marriage of infants and the consequent plethora of baby widows, the mere expenditure entailed by a Hindu match is sufficiently appalling to frighten any ordinary human being into a vow of everlasting celibacy.

'No greater calamity can befall a Hindu father than the marriage of a daughter within the period enjoined by custom,' says my friend emphatically. 'If he is in a position to afford a large dowry, well and good; if not, he may well wish that either his daughter or himself had never been born.' But whether he can afford it or not, he must ruin himself in this world before his daughter passes the marriageable age, or else he loses caste and is made to believe that he is doomed to eternal perdition in the next.'

It is obviously a case in which it is far more blessed to receive than to give away.

The wonder to me is that the ordinary agricultural labourer of this province can afford the luxury of financial suicide. His earnings, I hear, amount to less than twopence a day in coin, or a corresponding quantity of grain. Skilled artisans may, if the gods chance to be in a very good humour, earn as much as fourpence a day by working in their own villages, or even sixpence if called away from home. This means for both classes perennial abstinence of a somewhat severe character, diversified by periodical famines. Of these there are nine or ten recorded during the last 150 years, all caused, of course, by failure of

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the rains, for Oudh, like the rest of India, still labours under the humiliation of depending for its food almost entirely on the goodwill of the gods.

Another cause of distress is the patrician temperament of the people. Last year there was as great a scarcity of labour in the province as this year of water. An official inquiry instituted into the matter found that one of its causes was temporary affluence. The labourers, having pocketed their wages, preferred to go to sleep or to the nearest bazaar, and enthusiastic officials hastened to draw glowing contrasts between the past and the present. One of them wrote:

'Ten years ago there was much real distress among the labourers when the winter rains put a stop to irrigation; last winter I found the men enjoying a holiday in their villages, or off to a neighbouring town to see a friend, but they were all contented, had plenty of food, and showed no anxiety for the future.'

'No anxiety for the future' is a blessing of unquestionable value, provided it is based on something more convincing than improvidence.

Another cause of the scarcity of labour was the plague, for Oudh is as favourite a resort of the epidemic as any other part of India. In addition, it counts among its characteristic attractions fevers both quotidian and quartan, skin diseases of various kinds, bowel complaints, and small-pox. This last visitor usually appears in March, reaching the height of its activity in May, when it begins to decline, and then departs just in time to make room for another.

However, these curses and the depredations of panthers and other wild beasts notwithstanding, the province of Oudh contains over three millions of people, mostly Hindus, of various castes—Banias or traders, Kasyasths or clerks, twenty subdivisions of Sudras, not to mention the old aboriginal tribe of Pasis. More than one-tenth of this Hindu population consists of Brahmans, who flourish abundantly on the faith of their social inferiors.

Piety to the ordinary Hindu means the accurate recita-

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tion of the countless *mantras*, or formulas of propitiation, appropriate to every one of the million spirits who preside over every human deed, misdeed, fortune, and misfortune. The Brahmans are the professional exponents of these formulas. They are the intermediaries between earth and heaven, and the only competent guides in that labyrinth of legend and ritual in which the gods themselves are lost. Says the popular proverb: 'The gods are our masters, the *mantras* are the masters of the gods, the Brahmans are the masters of the *mantras;* therefore, the Brahmans are the masters of the world.'

Of course, the propitiation of the Unseen is not sufficiently profitable to satisfy all Brahmans. Some of the more ambitious among them are to be found at the Bar and on the Bench, others in various departments of the public service, and a few are now beginning to feel their way into the medical profession—a movement which is regarded by advanced Hindus as a pleasing sign of social progress, and a proof of a salutary revolution in the hide-bound sacerdotal caste. There are even reformers who go to the length of seriously advising the Brahmans to cast off their abhorrence of manual labour, and to try tanning and bootmaking. They argue that, since these holy men, while still resenting the approach of a pariah, have condescended to pursue a profession in which they are obliged not only to touch the living pariah patient, but also to dissect his body after death, they can no longer consistently object to the ceremonially less unclean occupations of tanning and boot-making. It will be some time, however, before these keepers of the venerable prejudices of their country can be induced to exchange their proud poverty for the humble shoemaker's last.

Such is the country of Oudh, and here is its capital, Lucknow—a great city beside the river Gumti. Like most Oriental towns, it inspires at first sight hopes of fantastic splendour, which are not fulfilled by sober experience. It is the prerogative of the semi-civilized to appear fair as a statue from without, and within to be foul

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as the sepulchre. Lucknow avails itself of this privilege. Its marble palaces, on approach, are magically transformed into brick, and the golden pinnacles of its temples into brass. The one thing in Lucknow that fears not the test of a close view are its gardens, and the one building that meets the candid eye of the sun unblushingly is the Chattar Manzil, or umbrella house—a chaotic obsession of stucco surmounted by a gilt cupola which glitters in the noontide light as many things do that are not gold.

'Eighty years ago this building harboured the harem of His Majesty Nasr-ud-din (the "Triumph of the Faith"),' said the Old Resident. 'It is now an Anglo-Indian club.'

I thought it deserved its fate.

Little else can be said of the other public buildings—their meaningless buttresses, tawdry domes, and pretentious pavilions. They are all characteristic of their builders.

The British rule has added nothing to these atrocities, but it has done its best to reveal them. The crooked lanes, which form one of the most mystifying traits of an Oriental town, have lost much of their mystery, and the maze of the bazaar no longer reeks of the picturesque prurience of the East. Space and light have been introduced with a ruthlessness only limited by the authorities' regard for local susceptibilities.

Yet Lucknow is a centre of provincial fashion and a high-school of Mahomedan theology, both fostered by the nobles and retainers of the extinct Court of Oudh, who still haunt these scenes of soft voluptuousness and royal vulgarity. These rich talukdars gave a fête to the Prince and Princess of Wales the other evening in the Kaisarbagh—an amorphous palace built by the last King of Oudh, half a century ago, at the cost of ten million rupees, and already in a state of promising decay.

There were great numbers of them, arrayed in silk, emeralds, diamonds, and nodding feathers of the bird of paradise, and in their address of welcome they expressed their cordial acquiescence in that decree of Allah which has converted their kingdom into a British commissioner-

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ship. This resignation is apparently shared by the direct descendants of the ex-kings of the country themselves, one of whom paid his homage to the Prince of Wales.

His ancestors began as Persian merchants, and established their rule over Oudh in the latter days of the Moghul Empire. In a hall situated in the Huseinabad Gardens I have seen a collection of life-size portraits of these Persian adventurers, the line beginning with the founder of the throne in 1732, and ending with the man who lost it in 1856.

Even without any knowledge of history the mere sight of these portraits would be sufficient to explain the rise of the family and to prevent any romantic regret for its fall. On one side you see a row of real men, lean, stern, and alert, grasping their swords firmly in their wiry hands. These turbaned Nawabs are gradually succeeded by crowned figures which gain in bulk what they have lost in dignity, culminating in the dull and sensuous corpulence of the last King, who spent his declining years in a suburb of Calcutta, doting on his concubines and visiting the animals and birds in the Alipur *Zoological* Gardens. Such a dynasty deserves little sympathy.

And yet, as, some time ago, I gazed at the strangely-shaped scimitars once gripped by the early Nawabs and now kept in a glass case of an English museum, I could not quite suppress a sentimental little sigh, which grew almost into an imaginary tear, as my eye wandered to an incomplete, but deliciously pretty, romantic poem by Nawab Zib Mahal Sahiba, one of the wives of Wazid Ali Shah. It began with a formula which to the Western mind is very remotely connected with romance, but one that supplies a convenient prelude to all Eastern books—from the Bible to a text-book of elementary geometry or a mendacious almanac. It is the familiar 'In the name of God, the Compassionate and Merciful'; and over this pious invocation there floated the royal crown, supported by two winged creatures, half angels, half mermaids, the group, with the scroll spread beneath, forming a sublimated skit on a European coat of arms.

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RUINS OF THE RESIDENCY, LUCKNOW.

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In the same museum I saw several yellow treaties, in parallel columns of English and Persian, whose broad seals had sealed the fate of the Kings of Oudh.

All these pathetic memorials of fallen greatness moved me that day, and the next I read in the local press, among the news of the day, a paragraph announcing that Prince Mirza Mahomed Askari, the son of the last King, was charged in a suburban police-court with neglect of his wife Ali Begum. An English lawyer appeared for the plaintiff and a native pleader for the defendant, and the intimate relations of the princely pair were settled by a police magistrate.

'What else can you expect from a family capable of such corpulence and such architecture?' asks the Old Resident unfeelingly, as we proceed towards the theatre of the drama which followed immediately upon the dethronement of the Kings of Ough.

We enter the grounds of the Residency and explore its ruins, led by one of them—a grizzled, hollow-cheeked survivor of the Mutiny. We find it impossible to summon any of those sentiments which are supposed to be appropriate to the occasion. We are in a delightful garden where the wind sighs in the foliage of the banyan, the peepul, the palm, and the pine, and the squirrels play merrily among their boughs. Here and there beds of roses blush in the sunlight, and the charred ruins themselves are almost gay under a purple mantle of bougainvillia creepers in bloom. I anticipated a cemetery and I find myself in a pleasaunce, and not even the veteran's tale of horrors, related in the manner of a quotation from an extremely tedious guide-book, succeeds in supplying a tone of mourning to the place.

As we bade good-bye to these flower-clad walls and to the grizzled veteran who had known them when they shook under the enemy's fire, we were pursued by sellers of photographs illustrating the scenes of the tragedy and the monuments raised to its victims. The sellers were Indians.

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CHAPTER XVI

CALCUTTA

We are in the land of the lotus. The plain stretches to right and left, moist, boundless, and teeming with life. Here is a ryot irrigating his field in antediluvian fashion. On a perpendicular pole swings a horizontal beam, to one end of which clings a mound of earth balancing the thing which hangs from the other. This is a long log of wood hollowed out and suspended from the beam by a rope. He pulls at the rope, and one end of the trough plunges into the canal; he relaxes, and it emerges, pouring the vivifying stream into the channel which distributes it over the field. Up and down, up and down, comes and goes the primitive see-saw with a patient day-long creaking. How familiar it sounds! It is one of those notes which give the East its unity of tone. Spreading from the banks of the Nile to the banks of the Ganges, that dull, rhythmic creaking, day after day, joins the Egyptian fellah to the Indian ryot as by an invisible chain—the chain of a common culture and temperament.

Village follows village: tapering cocoanut palms, broad-leaved banana-trees, bamboos fluttering their delicate blades in the tepid breeze, pale green pines shivering in the sunlight, thatched huts and low-domed temples peeping through the thick foliage, and those still, mosquito-haunted tanks, with the white and red lilies asleep on them, which supply each village with its water and its malaria.

Here and there you see buffaloes—clumsy, empty-eyed, black brutes—wallowing ponderously in the mud of a way-side tank, and close by a little boy is swimming in the

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same solid liquid. Boy and buffaloes form part of one picture. Man lives closer to Nature here than in the West, and has a deeper love for her creatures. The same friendly understanding between Nature's various children is seen on all sides. In yon meadow a sacred cow is grazing solemnly, and beside her stands a stork on one leg in an attitude of mute adoration. A little lower down another cow is grazing, and on her worshipful hump is perched a crow. It is all peace, rice, and sunshine. It is Bengal—a land whose human inhabitants would sooner shed ink than blood, and who derive a mysterious delight from hearing themselves talk.

Emollit gentes clementia cœli. Soft and blue is the sky above; beneath, the soil green and soft; and the two have conspired, with a smile, to fashion the well-to-do Bengalee's body and soul: so fat the one, the other so fatuous.

It is not hard to understand why in this home of fetid vegetation the unmentionable goddess, bowered in the lotus, should find her most ardent worshippers. There is hardly a hamlet in Bengal so lukewarm as not to boast one little shrine of intemperance, at which officiate priestesses dedicated to the service of the goddess by their parents in fulfilment of a vow. But the most palpable example of climatic influence is the Bengalee gentleman's voluminous personality: it breathes sleek voluptuousness. Voluptuousness also breathes the literature of the land. The very State documents of its ancient Kings sing at great length of the joys of love in language most picturesque and unfit for reproduction. In less abandoned language the modern poet, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, has apostrophized Bengal as:

'Mother!
Land of the glad white moonlit nights,
Land of trees with flowers in bloom,
Land of smiles, land of voices sweet,
Giver of joy, giver of desire!'

I have been able to hear of only one Bengalee dis-

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tinguishing himself as a soldier, and he achieved his distinction in South America.

We alight at Howrah—the Calcutta station—and find it disguised in cleanliness and palm branches. Thence we proceed down the busy river Hooghly, between rows of steamers and dinghies, all decorated with bunting, to the landing-place at Prinsep's Ghat, where the following programme is handed to us:

Public Arrival, Municipal Address, and Presentation of a Jewel to the Princess of Wales.
Small Dinner at Government House.
Levée.
Presentation of Colours to the King's Own Royal Lancaster Regiment and Medals for Thibet.
Races: Cup Day.
Dinner with the Lieutenant-Governor.
Divine Service at the Cathedral.
Small Dinner at Government House.
Proclamation Parade.
Steeplechases.
State Dinner. . . . . .

With many other items to the same exhilarating effect.

On glancing at this formidable list, I debated with myself whether I should devote my soul to the entertainments or to a study, however superficial, of Calcutta and its people. I chose the latter, for that might be instructive and even entertaining.

This, then, is the capital of the Indian Empire. It is known by many poetical names: the City of Palaces, the City of Dreadful Stenches, the City of Filthy Tanks, the City of Terrible Nights. It deserves them all, according to the time of day, the part of the town, the spectator's temper, and the mood of the weather.

It is a mild, well-meaning morning in what people here facetiously call the cold weather, and I am meandering through the European quarters—square blocks of stone or brick—each house suggesting unlimited space and

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leisure; broad verandas resting on substantial pillars, and courtyards pleasantly perfumed with the smell of the stables. Like the Homeric mansion, each Anglo-Indian dwelling makes a point of parading the fodder and the refuse of its horses. So pertinacious are these features and so penetrating that one is reluctantly forced to the conclusion that the Anglo-Indian's real cult is hippolatry, and megacephalosis his favourite disease.

I emerge into Chowringhee—a long, bumpy road lined on one side with museums, art galleries, hotels, municipal offices, tailors' shops, and other monuments of Western culture. On the other side the green Maidan spreads its dreamy beauty to the sunlight—just now softened by a film of white mist hanging low over the grass, 'like a bridal veil,' says my platitudinarian friend.

Down this broad thoroughfare rattle the electric tramcars, clanging their bells horribly. It is a necessary noise, for the sleepy, speculative coolies and cows will not move out of the rails without a warning sufficient to stir an average European corpse to consciousness—nay, at times not even that warning avails. A few weeks ago a wretched old woman was neatly decapitated by the wheels, and her friends protested mildly. Even cows are sometimes immolated, but the natives behold the sacred brute cut in twain almost with the same apathy with which they regard the death of a human being, so great is their stoicism; but to their own lives they are tenderly attached.

Between the electric tramways and the museums creaks an endless procession of country carts, each drawn by two patient beasts—distressing combinations of lofty ridges and deep valleys. Between the pair—on the projecting bamboo bottom of the cart—squats on his haunches the driver, clad mostly in his coffee-coloured skin. He squats holding the bullocks' tails in his hands, and urging them on with cries suggesting the end of all things. The poor bullocks amble on, licking their humid lips resignedly, until an exceptionally painful twist of the

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tail, administered alternately with deft celerity, goads them into a temporary gallop of extravagant grotesqueness and inefficiency. Not less grotesque or inefficient is the manner in which they are attached to the cumbrous vehicle. Between the hump and the head there is the hollow of the neck; in it rests the yoke, kept in position partly by a rope passed under the bullock's throat, but chiefly by the law of gravitation; and through the black, moist nostrils runs a string.

Thus the long-suffering cattle and the vehicle and the driver rumble slowly on, even as they did thousands and thousands of years ago, and as they will do thousands and thousands of years hence. The only concession to modern ideas is the grimy paper-patched lantern which dangles from the bottom of the cart, and at night gives some light by accident.

The bullock-cart is the natural vehicle of India. Yon yellow perils are only rickety, annoying caricatures of European carriages. Look at the drowsy coachman in his immense yellow turban, perched on his hams on the top of the box, with an umbrella spread above his head, wandering over the road whithersoever his wretched skeletons choose to stumble, unconscious of right side or left, sleepily contemptuous of other people's limbs. From behind each of these superlatively indecent things protrudes the immense yellow turban of the hanger-on. It takes two Bengalees to fail in managing one rickety solecism.

I stroll on, avoiding the sahib's motor-car on one hand, the ryot's bamboo-bottomed bullock-cart on the other, and wondering at the incongruity of things.

On one side I pass a row of skeleton coolies perched on the tops of their inverted baskets. One of them rushes up to me, reaching his basket forth. He offers to carry for me the book I am holding in my hand! Labour is so abundant in the East, except when you want it. But I prefer to carry my own book, which, apparently, is very bad form. In this happy land the less you do the more highly you are thought of. It is one of the few articles of the native

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creed which the foreign resident has found sufficiently congenial to embrace. Another article of faith in which the native and the foreigner meet is the article of food, or, rather, its quantity. A Bengalee wit has well expounded the matter in the aphorism, 'The Indian eats as if he had never eaten before, the Anglo-Indian as if he would never eat again.'

Behold European clerks rattling to their desks, each clerk in a dog-cart with a sleek pony in front and a grim, turbaned groom clinging behind, how he only knows. The burra-sahib, or manager, drives in his brougham, and has two sleek horses and two grim and turbaned grooms hanging behind from the hood. Respectability in Anglo-India literally means a coach and pair. The more horses you keep, the more respected you are. When good Anglo-Indians die, they do not go to heaven, they drive there.

Meanwhile they drive on this earthy maidan, raising clouds of red-yellow dust, and casting glances of unutterable disdain on the disgusting wretch who has the bad taste to walk.

I am one of those disgusting wretches, and I can see how disgusting I am in the eyes of every anæmic, muslined mem-sahib who whirls past. Her very horses look mildly censorious, and as for the fat, bearded coachman and lean grooms, they look not at all: a sahib who walks must belong to a very low caste.

The bridal veil has been lifted, and the maidan smiles invitingly. Under the foliage of the trees which fringe its edge squat the native barbers, shearing and shaving the coolies with scissors and razors which make my flesh creep.

Between each pair of merciless hair-splitters squats a vendor of the clinging condiments of the East, and here and there a lonely Hindu widow is spreading on the ground sacred Brahmanic pamphlets for sale. Here and there, also, a ring of Baboos, in English shirts flowing over Indian loin-cloths, sit on the grass reading morning papers

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in the vernacular, or in an English dialect presumably intelligible to them.

Past this peaceful crowd swaggers the native constable in a towering scarlet puggery and white tunic and breeches, which, in their spotless purity, form a vivid contrast to his character. The spindle-shanked creature struts along, extorting from the poor costers illegal toll for permission to hawk their wares—selling to them the shadow of a tree which does not belong to him. Verily, there is no tyrant like a small tyrant.

Herds of horned cattle, all afflicted with a hump, and flocks of shabby little sheep and melancholy little goats, are roaming over the grass, tended by shepherds in a dress consisting of a dirty loin-cloth. Calves there are, too, and lambs and kids, but not even these exhibit any of the levity of youth. It is the same with the foals and the chickens. As for the children of men, they must be born a century old. An infant Brahman sounds like a ludicrous contradiction in terms, and, as a matter of fact, does not exist. Look at that dusky little body by the roadside, clad in a waistband and silver anklets. As I pass by, he lifts up his eyes, and out of their black depths looks the apathetic, incurious gravity of a thousand years.

The maidan is studded with green, rusty statues of Viceroys and Commanders-in-Chief, warriors and legislators, high on their marble pedestals, their breasts covered with Orders, and their heads and shoulders with white badges conferred by the crows of the Indian Empire, which, as I walk under the trees, threaten me with the fate of Tobit.

Unlike most Orientals, the Calcutta crow is no respecter of persons.

And so by paths devious I reach the modern representative of Old Fort William. Though restored, enlarged, and altogether transformed, the fortress still is full of the gloomy memories of the great tragedy which it witnessed on the sultry night of June 20, 1756. I mean, as every schoolmaster knows, the Black Hole tragedy. It is a sad tale, and too often told to bear telling again.

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GOVERNMENT HOUSE, CALCUTTA.

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On coming out of the Fort I was accosted by a long-bearded and turbaned Mahomedan, armed with a sheaf of dirty yellow slips of paper. He was anxious to tell me my fortune. Next to the fly, the cripple, the crow, and the native teacher of languages, the fortune-teller is, I think, the most irritatingly persistent pest of an Indian city. But he desisted when he heard me assert in tones of unmistakable sincerity that my time was valuable and my temper short.

Having inspected the Government House and adjacent squares—things of vast pretension and whitewash, in which green palms nod mockingly at Corinthian columns: incoherent, insincere, unreal, and unideaed—I returned to Chowringhee.

Among the better-class natives I see faces which impress me strangely by their look of sweetness and that obsolete virtue which the ancient Greeks called *αἰδώς*. Other faces impress me as strangely by their austere spirituality—long, thin faces, full of thought. But for their colour and dress, these men might be taken for cardinals of the Newman type—self-centred saints sure of their own salvation, benignly indifferent to the rest of the world. If there is any light in them, it is as the light of the Indian firefly—a light which, the wise man would say, gives no heat, and illumines nothing but itself.

The absence of native ladies from the streets is striking. On the other hand, there is no lack of women; honest enough, though they cannot afford the luxury of self-effacement. Viewed from behind, they all appear to have tired of growing at the age of ten—frail, diminutive things wrapped in a flowing veil, white or red, or edged with red, gathered in about the middle and thence drawn diagonally over the head—the most naïvely graceful garment I ever saw, save on Greek vases. But the Indian woman's capacity for graceful simplicity ends in her veil. Rings pierce the ears in rows, beginning at the top and ending at the tip of the lobe; rings surround each finger and toe, while arms and ankles alike are alternate stripes of brown

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skin and silver band; and a large ring dangles from one nostril. It is probably not more painful than the string which runs through the bullock's upper lip, but to me it is equally repulsive. Despite their noble draperies, these coolie women, after all, appear to nourish no higher ideal of personal embellishment than our own earringed ladies.

But here comes a closed palanquin, in which one may be permitted to surmise a high-born Indian matron yawning in state. She is borne to the river for her ritual bath. In front of and behind the portable prison straggle attendants in gorgeous, dirty liveries of red and yellow. Some of them take their robes off, and deposit them over their unconscious mistress's head, remaining in brown semi-nakedness. The procession marches on, a good symbol of the mystery, the piety, and the superficial magnificence of the East.

And here is the shameless abandon, the ineffable filth and sickening misery of the East.

I have turned the corner of Chowringhee, and am at once in regions which the hyperæsthetic should shun like the plague—streets of ugly sights, evil smells, and sounds discordant. Here coarseness holds carnival. Here Vice is the coryphæus, and variety of villainy makes up the chorus: opium dens, grog dens, temples of gruesome gods, and shrines of the under-dressed, over-breasted goddess follow one another in demoniacal succession. The one exception are these rows of Celestial bootmakers' establishments. On the roof of one I see a real Chinese mother playing solemnly with her baby—a real baby Chinaman: wonderful! Many of these sad-faced bootmakers are working outside their doors, half naked, with their pigtails decorously wound round their heads. They are light-skinned and plump compared to the dark-skinned and emaciated Hindu coolies. I like them. A Chinaman, even when naked, looks decent. There is such an expression of thoughtfulness and self-respect in his face, and he makes such honest boots. Naked or not, Mr. Lai Fong looks as if he were born civilized, and had never got over it.

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Next to these silent, industrious men from the Far East you see the matted mane and wild eyes of the holy madman of Hindustan: face and breast smeared with ashes, a long rosary dangling from his neck, his fleshless limbs and vacant stare testifying to his sincerity. Every temple harbours a number of such pilgrims, and an even greater number of another kind of devotees. The fanatics represent the cult of self-denial in excess; in no less excess the others represent the cult of self-indulgence. And they both are holy in Hindustan.

The Hindu priestesses conduct their devotional exercises within the precincts of the temple, their Mahomedan rivals next door to it. The latter are at this hour lounging in the crazy balconies over the shops, some in unaffected nudity, others emphasizing the coarse charms which they pretend to conceal. Here is a trio of these black Magdalenes robed in gorgeous simplicity: three broad splashes of brilliant colour—sky-blue, scarlet, and saffron—against a background of dingy whitewash, a group by some old Dutch master, much the worse for—no, it is not age. House and inmates alike proclaim the sad law which runs throughout the life of Southern Asia: precocious maturity and early decay.

I pass more temples richly endowed and in utter disrepair — crumbling, you might say, under the weight of wealth, for does not the venerable Vyâsa declare in the Vedas that the giver of land and gold to the gods resides sixty thousand years in heaven, but he who takes the gift away resides as long in hell? Does he not state that they who rob a temple of its dowry are born again as black cobras, and live in dry holes in the waterless jungles of the Vindhyas? Yes, it is not indigence these temples suffer from. Whence their woebegone appearance, then? I suspect the priests know that other saying of the venerable Vyâsa: 'The fruit of the earth belongs to him who possesses it.'

I go on. Now I pass a mosque, square, flat-roofed, many-domed, many-pinnacled, wholly uninspiring. Then

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come the shops of Mahomedan barbers and wig-makers; of bone-setters, who invite you, with many-tongued persuasiveness, to walk quickly in and have your sprained ankles and broken spine made whole again. Outside each shop there sits cross-legged, or squats on his hams, a professional letter-writer, pen in hand. He must be the wretch who perpetrated the dozens of applications which I received the other day in answer to a harmless advertisement for a servant. They came like a plague of locusts from dozens of gentlemen who averred their anxiety to serve me in any capacity, apparently for the mere virtue of the thing. One of them declared: 'I have a prurient desire to serve you, and if you judge me worthy of your confidence I will never fail to belabour myself to this end.'

And as you walk warily through this redundance of filth, so infamous, yet so fascinating, dodging the bullock-carts and enjoying the struggle for giving and taking the wall, your nostrils are filled now with the drowsy fragrance of Eastern spices, now with the all-pervading pungency of the rancid cocoanut oil wherewith your incomprehensible neighbours love to anoint their bodies, and again you sniff the fumes of the everlasting hooka: *quot homines tot odores.*

A wretched beggar approaches me, whining. He addresses me in Oriental hyperbole as *Gharib parwar* ('Nourisher of the Poor!'). I am pleased at the title, undeserved though I know it to be, and give him two copper pieces, and he limps on his way blessing me. I thought I had given him twopence—it turns out to be two pice (= two farthings), but I hope the paucity of the donation will not affect the efficacy of the benediction. At all events, I have acquired a halfpenny worth of merit.

And so I move on, happy in the reflection that I have done my clumsy best to confirm an immortal soul in habits of sloth. Bah! one must be a hardened moralist, or worse, to think of such things in India. A Hindu

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beggar is a species by himself, and has to be measured by a special ethical tape.

Then come shops surmounted by cryptic inscriptions—long lines of rigid, angular characters, all looking obliquely to the left. Some are provided with a Christian translation. In one of them I read, 'Holy Soap Manufacturing Co.' Holiness and manufacturing is a combination suggestive of much, but here it means, I suppose, nothing more abstruse than soap free from the fat of the sacred cow—for the cow, paradoxical though it may appear, is revered sincerely, while her tail is often pulled, and pulled off, quite as sincerely. Strange and inscrutable are the inconsistencies of the human heart!

While pondering over these matters, I am very nearly run over by a delirious vehicle. I stop it, step into it, and return by another route, feeling that I have earned the right of comparative rest.

I am jerked past several malarious tanks, and in their depths I see inverted native gentlemen in their flowing white shirts playing lawn-tennis. The poor in this country live naked, the rich in their nightshirts.

Now and again a fashionable equipage passes us: steeds of irreproachable magnificence; but the coachman and the two footmen who, fly-whisk in hand, cling to the hood behind are attired with a splendour which I am only prevented from describing as it deserves by an uneasy recollection of the Lord Mayor's Show.

Inside the carriage there sits an elderly gentleman and two youths, all clad in spotless white, bareheaded, and wearing an expression of modest nobility which many a robust, silk-hatted Lord Mayor might do worse than envy.

And so we rattle on through the crowds, my garry barely escaping collision with other delirious garries of the Black Maria type. But even delirium has its little compensations. To my eternal shame I will confess that I felt amused at the sight of many a flabby Bengalee Adonis skedaddling out of the way and into the mud. A

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little leaping, methinks, will do him good. He seems to have appropriated more than his fair share of fat in a world made up so woefully of skin and bones.

Here and there, in the midst of all this squalor and tawdriness, the tumbledown shanties and general topsy-turvydom, I see a majestic building in the Greek style—Doric, Ionic or Corinthian columns, pediments and all! The delirium becomes tremens, and the noise and the smells, the hoarse cries, the rattling of wheels in the fast-gathering gloom, threaten abundant stuff for future night-mares. To complete the pandemonium, the crows are now settling on the trees for the night in their millions, filling the air with the one note that is not quite novel; they speak the same nerve-shattering jargon as English rooks, though with a foreign accent. . . .

Pleasant it is to lapse into a long cane-chair, and to watch the moon shedding her soft light over the world, subduing its incongruities into harmony. The pseudo-Gothic spire of yon cathedral and the pseudo-Doric pediment of that other monstrosity look almost inoffensive in the spectral moonlight; the cocoanut palms tower darkly against the white sky, and a firefly glimmers through their foliage, vanishes, and glimmers again. The crickets have set up their sweet tune—'Sweet!' exclaims my platitudinarian friend in amazement. Yes, my friend, sweet to one who has the temerity of his tastes—some chirping intermittently, others with a continuous shrillness; a neighbouring tank rings with the songs of the frogs, croaking in one chorus, deafening, yet to me strangely delightful; from far away comes the rumbling of the illuminated town—even that toned down into a rhythmic lullaby—and over all hovers the sacred spirit of the night. Ah, *si sic semper!*

Having already discussed the beggar, the Brahman, and the bull of India, I feel in duty bound to say something concerning another product of the country beginning with the same letter of the alphabet.

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The Baboo.

Whether it was that the sound of the word, by a fatal association of ideas, reminded me of the vulgar saying, 'bo to a goose,' or whether I was the victim of some other subtle psychological hallucination, I know not. But, when I first heard the name, I candidly took it to be an opprobrious epithet applied by the arrogant European to the down-trodden and irrepressible gentleman of Bengal. Even when I saw it in print, affixed to polysyllables of unquestionable respectability, I could not quite dissociate it from the odious connotation, and felt nervous about using it.

Whence comes the Baboo? Whither is he going? Has he any other mission in life than that of supplying us with an object-lesson in the ludicrous? Has he got a soul? In brief, What is a Baboo?

In my perplexity I consulted a great indigenous oracle, which responded as follows: 'This is a euphonious Oriental title, suggestive of some amiable qualities which are eminently calculated to adorn and elevate human life.'

This definition I repeated to the Old Resident, who, being in an epigrammatic mood, condensed it into a single sentence wherein the Bengalee Baboo was tersely described as 'an ass.'

My perplexity, as will easily be imagined, was not lessened, but rather augmented, by so startling a discrepancy of expert opinion. Longer acquaintance with India has led me to the conclusion that in this, as in all other matters of moment, the truth lies between the two extremes.

In arriving at this original conclusion, I was materially assisted by the Bengalee oracle itself, which, on being again consulted, admitted that the Baboo has long since fallen from the pristine eminence suggested by his euphonious title; that at the present hour 'the Anglicized Baboos are certainly well-meaning men, instinctively disposed to move within the groove traditionally prescribed

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for them, but the scintillation of European ideas and a servile imitation of Western manners have played sad havoc with their original tendencies.'

This calm and judicial anathema was corroborated by another native tribunal, which, in less lofty language, addressed me as follows: 'Just see, Baboo Ghosh, Tosh or Bosh enters the Civil Service, and immediately he takes a hat and coat and becomes a "mister." He cuts off all connection with his countrymen, and poses as a European in every way. Some of them even take the trouble to be born in England, oblivious of the adage concerning the cow which is born in a stable—or is it the ass born in a cowshed?'

Nor is this the whole of their degeneracy. The Anglicized Baboos, as a third Pythian oracle puts it, 'turn a deaf ear to the unmistakable admonitions of our occult inner selves, and run headlong to an unmitigated doom, only out of an innate perversity of our own nature—viz., the desire for imitating the external sahib even at the cost of health and life.' 'The groanings of the sick and the wailings of the bereaved, which shake the walls of every house in the country,' were shrewdly traced to this blind imitation of the 'youthful abortions of vaunted civilization'—namely, to the English habit of drinking tea and coffee:

'Our forefathers had the uncommon good sense of borning* and continuing Bengalees. Our society had excellent tone and health at the time, and tea and coffee would have been considered as gross violations of the article of faith.' Time was when 'a Hindu would have left his bed a little before the break of dawn, performed his ablutions, recited his morning prayer, and then sat to a breakfast consisting of bits of cleansed ginger and water-soaked grain saturate with Saindhava salt.'

But those days of pastoral innocence and ginger-bits are, alas! over. Now it is otherwise. This *temporis acti laudator* vouches for the fact that he has actually seen 'in

* Bengalee English for 'being born.'

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certain houses the kettle kept simmering all day long, and tea served out to several of its inmates three or four times a day!'

These are, then, the delinquencies of the Baboo from the point of view of his fellow-countrymen: he is too English. From the English point of view his great sin is that he is too native. They are both right. The Baboo, as I see him, is a soft, smooth, bare-headed and bare-legged mass of snuff-coloured rotundity in a starched English white shirt, flowing outside his loin-cloth, and an umbrella.

His greatest charm is his smile, and eloquence his least vice. He is eloquent even under chloroform. A short time ago a young Bengalee gentleman was placed under anæsthetics in a local hospital. Now, it is a well-known fact that anæsthetics bring a man's true character out even better than wine. An Englishman under chloroform swears; an Italian sings; a German shouts for beer; the Bengalee patient said, 'Ladies and gentlemen, I wish to say a few words. . . .'

Nevertheless, the Bengalee Baboos are a really intelligent race of men, and there are few Native States in India where you do not find them filling the highest administrative positions. They would also be a powerful one were they less firmly convinced that wisdom is only another name for words. They are a censorious race, too, and, though I should be the last person in the world to complain of criticism, the Lieutenant-Governor, I hear, finds it irritating at times. Personally, what I do resent is the superfluity of the Bengalee's eloquence and its stupendous futility. I dislike waste, if it be only of wind.

On the other hand, I am grateful to the Baboo for enabling me to behold, for the first time in my life, volubility combined with a total absence of vivacity. The Bengalee appears to me to have been created principally in order to refute the Shakespearean division of mankind into corpulent and discontented. He can be both.

It is easy to laugh at the Baboo's eccentricities—far

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easier to laugh than to justify the laughter. But who is to blame for them? We have created the modern Bengalee. In our schools we have taught him to worship all that is English and, indirectly, to despise all that is native. He is the inevitable result of the new acting upon the old. His English shirt and Eastern loin-cloth represent a tragelaphic stage of transition which may lead far or to reaction. Meanwhile, he is a living page of history—one of history's hackneyed repetitions.

The spread in India of English culture, such as it is, reminds me vividly of the spread of pseudo-Hellenic culture over Western Asia during the Macedonian period, and the young Baboo of Calcutta in his English shirt enables me to realize the impression which a Syrian youth of Antioch in the broad-brimmed hat, high-laced boots, and chlamys of a Greek *ephebos* must have produced on the visitor from Athens. His English to real English is what New Testament Greek was to the language spoken in contemporary Greece. An Athenian *Punch* of the time of the Seleucids, had such a brilliant institution existed in that benighted age, would, no doubt, have handed down to us the features and the fatuity of many a Greco-Syrian Mr. Jabberjee.

The parallel holds in every particular. To the Hellenistic theatre and its obscenities corresponds the Anglo-Indian theatre and its banalities; to the Greek gymnasium the cricket, hockey, or football field; to the Greek stoa our club; to the Greek agora our Parliamentary talking-place, so faithfully parodied in the Indian National Congress. All these things, by precept or by example, have been thrust upon the Indian, and the Indian, poor fellow, being an imitator by the grace of God, has tried to copy them as best he could, and to become Anglicized, just as the Oriental of twenty-one centuries ago became Hellenized—and not one inch more.

The same remark applies to our vices. We have taught the Indian to do and to drink all sorts of things that were foreign to his nature, without weaning him first from his

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hereditary vices. He formerly indulged in opium; now he indulges also in cocaine. He formerly drank toddy; now he also drinks whisky. He was formerly only a flatterer by nature; our rule has made him both obsequious and disloyal. Formerly he had as many lawful wives as he could support decently; now he has only one lawful wife.

If the modern Baboo bears a double burden of sin, who is to blame?

The above reflections were suggested to me by a ceremony which took place in the Calcutta University. The object was to inflict upon his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales the degree of Doctor of Laws.

'It was a splendid performance,' remarked to me a Bengalee M.A. whose name is written Mr. Mukhopadhyay, and pronounced Baboo Mookerjee. He is a highly loyal Baboo, and a firm admirer of the Government of India, of which he is a typical, if somewhat subordinate, member.

'Whatever the shortcomings or deficiencies of our administration may be, my honourable friend and sir,' he said to me in the style of familiarity justified by our five minutes' acquaintance, 'you cannot but admire our futility of resource.'

As he did not look capable of a conscious anticlimax, I took it to be a slip for 'fertility.' It also was one of those pregnant truths which sometimes issue from the mouths of babes and Baboos.

But this was only a gala occasion, on which the Baboo appeared in his best clothes and holiday manners. A casual visit to some of the factories where he is actually made is most enlightening. You see at a glance that here penury is, as it should be, the cradle-mate of learning. Squalor and license rule jointly over a class which recalls strangely both the tub of Diogenes and an ordinary pig-sty—battered desks, crazy benches, floor reeking of immemorial bare feet, chairs creeping with innumerable secret life, and from the ceiling swings an ancient punka, squeaking sadly as it trails its tattered frill over the professorial head.

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The benches swarm with a studious youth, loin-clothed, bare-legged, their unclean shirt-sleeves tucked up to the elbows, as though in preparation for the struggle for existence. Their shiny limbs and faces show that all the wisdom which these students cannot assimilate inwardly is instantly translated into oil. And the air is rancid with the aroma thereof.

The professor goes on droning, the pupils go on chewing betel, chatting, and expectorating diligently, the punka goes on squeaking sadly, and with these noises of work is agreeably mingled the idle plashing and jabbering of the servants, as they wash themselves or their clothes in an adjoining bathroom.

Then the bell rings cheerfully for the roll-call. This is the essential part of the lecture. Immediately, crowds that had deemed it unnecessary to enter the class, but spent the hour on the veranda, undisturbed by the lecturer's voice, rush eagerly in to answer 'Here, sir.' Thus the University by-law which requires students to keep a certain number of lectures is duly observed. As my Baboo friend has expressed it with his usual felicity, 'They are so intelligent and studious that one wonders at the progress they have made.'

When not attending his classes, the Calcutta undergraduate develops other than the intellectual side of his nature in private. As in many cases he comes from the interior, his Calcutta residence is either in, or in the immediate vicinity of, a temple of the demotic Aphrodite.

But when his giddy undergraduate days are over, and Mr. Bosh has become a hooded B.A., you hear him with his peers pleading eloquently in the small courts for a small fee, or, more often, you see him and them in all the public offices, sitting in serried ranks, clad in the regulation shirt and a smattering of curious English, scribbling and perspiring profusely for one or two pounds a month. You also recognise many of them in damp, dimly-lighted mercantile offices—cadaverous clerks with hollow cheeks and eyes sparkling with arithmetic and hunger.

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There they sit chained to a desk, ten of them doing the work of one ordinary mortal. Or you see the exceptionally successful one—the one who has sold himself to a wealthy father-in-law—standing up in the National Congress and inveighing, in tones worthy of Demosthenes, against the Government's 'policy of retrogradation.'

But when I remember that Syria produced a Lucian, I cannot but think that the time may come when the Baboo will cease to be a passive spring of Western laughter. Meanwhile, our attitude towards him and his peers is singular. When the East refuses to imitate us, we call her savage; and when she attempts to do so, we call her simian. We denounce the Mahdis and Mullahs and Dalai Lamas and Boxers as fanatics, and we deride the Baboos as fools. It is an attitude that, methinks, speaks of an abundant lack of intelligence somewhere, for does not every Anglo-Indian echo, parrot-like, the mischievous and shallow platitude:

> 'The East is East and the West is West,
> And never the twain can meet'?

The difference between the two is not one of kind, but one of development. Asia is essentially Europe in her childhood—or is it second childhood?

In any case, we have been acting on that assumption. We have undertaken to teach the Hindus not to take their dying parents to the Ganges, but to the doctor; not to burn their widows, but to marry them; to bury and not to eat corpses; to cherish their wives, not to cut off their noses; to labour more and to beg less; to try to ward off famine by thrift, and not by prayer; to turn their eyes from heaven to earth, and to say 'No.'

What are our chances of success?

That the chasm which is supposed to gape naturally between the man of Europe and the man of Asia exists only in the prejudiced mind which knows nothing of the past history of either, and is invulnerable to the lessons conveyed by a serious comparative study of both at present,

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I firmly believe. But, if the influence of Europe over India is to yield anything more useful than a frantic reaction, it must go beyond the school. It must be extended over the broadest area of Indian life, and made to permeate, through the surface, into the deep recesses of Indian nature.

This, however, though I hold it to be possible, cannot come to pass so long as our wives and our daughters disdain the society of Indian women, and so long as we refuse to breathe—in our clubs, railway-carriages, and houses—the same air as Indian men. But, before we give up our own aloofness, the Indians must also give up their customs of chewing betel, of nursing their toes, and of expectorating in our presence. Meanwhile, the abhorrence is mutual. If the European scorns the native, the native—the genuine, self-respecting Hindu—repays the debt with interest. At the present hour either of them might address the other, with perfect sincerity, in the words in which the medieval Jew addressed the Gentile:

'I will buy with you, sell with you, talk with you, walk with you, and so following; but I will not eat with you, drink with you, nor pray with you'—nor, highest barrier of all, intermarry with you.

And this barrier is daily growing higher, owing to the Anglo-Indian Government's self-contradictory persistence in looking upon the Indian as a curiosity belonging to another species, while, at the same time, it endeavours to train him according to the rules of ours. The Anglo-Indian cannot understand that it is hardly possible to educate the Indian on Western ideas, and yet to treat him as if he were a primitive Oriental. This attitude is, perhaps, due to mere stupidity. Another cause of alienation is the insolence of some Indian Civil Servants. I have seen young men springing from the London suburbs treating in public aged native noblemen in a manner which a gentleman would not have adopted towards his valet. In any other country these things would have begotten sedition long ago. In India they beget a bitter-

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ness which is none the less ominous because it is rarely expressed in action. The recent agitation in Bengal and the boycott movement, I believe, would never have attained the dimensions which they did attain but for the fact that in this denunciation of English goods many Indians found an opportunity of expressing their antipathy to the English nation. If my advice were asked—a contingency happily quite remote — I would say, in my pedantic way: *Liberalitate subjectos retinere satius esse credo quam metu.* But the Olympians on whose knees these matters rest think otherwise. So long as things are as they are we may profess our anxiety to Occidentalize the Oriental. We may as hopefully strive to Occidentalize the man in the moon.

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CHAPTER XVII

RANGOON

We left Calcutta on January 9 and snorted down the river Hooghly, an offspring of the Ganges, mild, majestic, and muddy. Gradually the factory chimneys and their smoke glided out of view, and their place was taken by green cocoanut palms, low, cattle-haunted pastures and fields undulating down to the margin of the stream, on whose yellow, sunlit waves dance the curved dinghies lazily.

Three days' voyage across the blue Bay of Bengal brought us to the mouth of the Rangoon River, an offspring of the Irrawaddy, no less mild, majestic, and muddy, its banks green with palms, pastures, and fields, its bosom dotted with boats as curved as the dinghies of the Hooghly, though more gracefully shaped and split at the stern. It was only when in sight of Rangoon City itself that the gilded points of two pagodas flashing above the tree-tops brought home to me the pleasant conviction that I was no longer in India.

I had often heard my platitudinarian friend describe Burma as 'the most picturesque portion of the Indian Empire,' and was therefore prepared to find it the dullest. But, for once, reality has proved even more extravagant than my friend's stupidity. A new country is like a new face. You either dislike it at first sight or you fall captive to its charm. Burma would stir to song the veriest Bœotian. Even Rangoon—this spurious portal to Burma proper—may inspire a prelude to the pæan. Its streets are broad, its trees are green, and

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its people a patchwork of complexions and costumes. The dark-skinned, half-naked coolies of India are everywhere, carrying, sleeping, driving, and watering the streets out of two buckets slung from a bamboo pole across the shoulders, each bucket armed with a long bamboo spout. The shops swarm with the traders of India, the long-haired, effeminate sons of Ceylon, and the pigtails of pale Chinese, while in the more pretentious establishments may be seen the stiff black tiara of the enterprising Parsi. The Old Resident, as though anxious to raise my curiosity to the height of insanity, points out to me in rapid succession representatives of other communities—Surati, Khoja, Chittagonian—and enlarges with deadly deliberation on the subtle differences in dress and deportment which enable the initiated to distinguish the various subdivisions of each race.

By degrees you discover in this cosmopolitan medley the real Burmese—the clean, happy-go-lucky, aristocratic children of the land, content to leave the sordid pursuit of lucre to their more astute and prosaic competitors from East and West. In character and creed, dialect and dress, they form a beautiful compromise between the Indian and the Chinaman: brighter than the one, lazier than the other, more lovable than either. Men and women all lounge about clad in silken sunsets, smoking cheroots, cigarettes, or tubes filled with multifarious fragrance, and in size equal unto a policeman's truncheon.

It is an idyllic people, almost unreal in its delicate quaintness. It also is—the male portion of it—a trifle absurd. 'Nga Ba!' 'Maung Ka!'—such are the cries you hear in the street, and an elementary observation satisfies you that these inarticulate sounds are no crude imitations of the bleating of sheep and the cawing of crows, but everyday names seriously borne by real men who walk on two legs, who eat and drink and laugh like mortals. Nga Ba! Nga Ba! Manifestly, to ba or not to ba, that is the question in Rangoon.

Even the poorest of the people despise wealth, and,

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though they will work with pleasure for a jovial task-master who takes the trouble to entertain them, they turn their backs disdainfully on anyone who has nothing more poetical to offer than money. Wit, in sober earnest, is of greater value to a Burmese labourer than wages. His love for his cattle is profound, and it extends to refusing to milk them for the benefit of the Old Resident. The scruple is not due to any narrow abhorrence of the foreigner or of milk. The tinned abominations of Western dairies are widely advertised on the walls and in the newspapers of Rangoon, and find immense favour in the palates of her sons and daughters. But the Burman does not like to rob the calf of its food. The same kindly feeling compels this most unpractical of Orientals to lavish on these creatures an amount of affectionate care which renders them a corpulent contrast to their much-suffering kin on the other side of the Bay.

These and other flowers of knowledge I draw from the Old Resident's inexhaustible cornucopia, as we walk down the broad thoroughfares on our way to the great Shwe Dagon Pagoda. We pass many Burmese ladies, dainty and diminutive, some bound for the same destination. They saunter along, thick-soled sandals, red or green, under their bare white little feet, paper parasols over their flower-wreathed knobs of glossy black hair, a short white jacket through whose transparent texture gleam the soft white arms, a pink sash thrown over the neck, and the lower part of the body wrapt in a bright drapery of pink or blue which clings fondly to the limbs, concealing not the harmonious curves which it covers. A rope of pearls round the slender little neck, a pair of diamonds or emeralds attached to the ears, and a bracelet of gold, add their own chastened glitter to the shimmer and rustle of silk, completing the conquest which the black almond eyes and warm red lips have begun.

And the self-possession of these ladies is as wonderful as their taste. There is no purdah in Burma. These sunny little nymphs of the rosy lips and pencilled eye-

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brows are as free and fearless as the parrots. They have a friendly word and a smile for every male acquaintance, and for those whom the Fates blessed at their birth favours sweeter than empty words or smiles. They choose their own mates, these fairies of the East, bestowing themselves on mere mortals, even as did the divinities of old Olympus. And yet, such is the perversity of human nature, these privileged beings pray for no higher boon of the gods than to be reborn men.

They pray as frequently and fervently as they love. Here are several groups of them entering the great pagoda with us. We pass between the two great, hideous monsters of stone which gape on either side of the entrance, and traverse rows of stalls kept by powdered women, each exposing for sale the offerings which the gods of Burma love: beeswax tapers, flowers, real and artificial, toy umbrellas and fans of paper, bunches of aromatic wood, fruit, and so forth. Our little ladies pause before these stalls, and, having made their pious purchases, proceed up the marble flights of steps, which rise one above the other under the carved wooden arches, thronged by bare-footed worshippers ascending and descending through the dusk, slippers in hand, cheroot in mouth. We follow, and finally attain the open platform, from the middle of which shoots the conical pagoda, its face covered with gold, its apex crowned with a multiple mitre, round which hang many little bells tinkling in the breeze.

It was built by two brothers, Taphussa and Bhallika by name, who lived once upon a time in Ukkala, near the modern city of Rangoon, and who travelled to India in the pursuit of commerce. On their way they met a *nat*, or fairy, who directed them to the spot where the Buddha was meditating under the Rajayatana-tree. The rest of the story may be given in the Old Resident's own words:

'Arriving there, the two brothers respectfully saluted the Buddha, and presented him with offerings of rice and honey cakes. Immediately four celestial beings brought

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four bowls made of stone, which the Buddha, by a miracle, converted into one. The two brothers then put their offerings into the bowl, and the Buddha, after partaking of the repast, presented them with eight hairs, which they enshrined in the cavity of a pagoda erected on their return to their native country. Successive concentric layers of bricks have been laid which have enlarged the size and height of the Shwe Dagon Pagoda, until the successor of Alompra, about the year A.D. 1770, completed the building as we now see it.'

It shoots from the midst of many trees, small shrines, and altars, each altar grimy with the smoke and gray with the drippings of countless candles, each pillared, gilt and ornate shrine enclosing a Buddha of smooth white marble or burnished brass, seated cross-legged with the left hand held in front, hollow upward, the right hanging down, calling the earth serenely to witness the truth of his gospel. Round each image are fixed the offerings of the faithful: fans, paper umbrellas, even a clock. Beside one of the images I see a little table laid out with cakes, oranges, jugs, napkins, and all the pomp of a doll's feast. Before each shrine kneel groups of worshippers—men, women, and little children. They kneel on mats, with their legs tucked underneath, their slippers ranged behind them, their hands uplifted in prayer, and clasping bouquets of roses. And above the murmur of prayer can be heard now and again the crowing of a cock, the cackle of hens, and the bark of a pariah dog, the whole concert punctuated by the deep, dull sound of a bell, not rung, but struck with an iron hammer like a gong.

All these shrines are erected by the piety of persons wishing to acquire merit. But at the foot of the great solid pagoda stand the four shrines which form an integral part of it. They are full of bronze-gilt Buddhas, great and small, ranged along the sides, and reflecting dimly the lights and shades of innumerable flickering candles. The roof above and the cornices of the pillars are hung with multifarious offerings, among them many tresses of black

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THE SHWE DAGON PAGODA, RANGOON.

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hair dedicated by lovelorn maidens, and bunches of corn-ears, tokens of a farmer's troubles; and the sparrows peck at these ears, blessing the gods who have created man to sow and to reap for them, and scattering over the congregation grains which are joyfully picked up by the cackling hens. From the foliage of the trees outside comes the piping of other feathered things, and, you might say, the whole creation joins in one peaceful chorus of praise.

The scene is strange, and yet perfectly intelligible. The Burmese are obviously on terms of easy familiarity with their gods. Here is paganism in its most charming aspect—the paganism of Theocritus—sensuous, joyous, direct, charitable, sane, and sincere. The attitude of the human portion of the congregation bears out that view. They do not appear to labour under any kind of awe. There is no stiffness about their devotion. Their piety is equally free from the self-conscious ostentation of the Pharisee, and from the self-conscious fugitiveness of the Western saint. There is nothing of the corybantic or of the ascetic in it. It is the simple, unaffected outpouring of hearts longing or grateful. And the prayers for the happy reincarnation of all living things are diversified by frank puffs at the cheroot. This appears to be an inevitable article of a Burmese man or woman's apparel, almost of his or her faith. In brief, were I in search of a religion, I would gladly become a Buddhist—perhaps a Buddhist monk.

There are troops of them in this pagoda, stepping gravely along the corridors, bare-footed, bare-armed, face and head clean-shaven, their orange togas thrown over the left shoulder and thence flowing down in majestic folds, such as one sees only in ancient Greek and Roman statues. Men, women, and monks are all that the most fastidious dramatic critic could desire. The last-mentioned class would also satisfy the most melancholy of sociologists. The Burmese monk's vow is binding only so long as sincerity endures. A Burmese brother need not play the hypocrite. When the orange robe begins to irk, he is at

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liberty to take it off and to go into the world without incurring any reproach for his candour. This, at all events, is the theory on which Burmese monasticism is based. In practice, of course, the flesh, even in Burma, is weak. At times a brother, forced to choose between the spirit and the stomach, continues a monk after having ceased to be a saint. One must live, and how can he face life and its responsibilities who has been only apprenticed to its renunciations? For such failures a respectable Burman has as little respect as Boccaccio had for the frail friars of his time, and with as good reason.

But the vast majority of these yellow, silent figures deserve all the reverence paid to them. You hear that all the people of Burma, high and low alike, can read, write, and reckon. This elementary education is freely provided in the convents by the good monks and nuns, not from any practical desire of 'lifting up the masses' in this world, but for the pure sake of acquiring merit in the next. So sound, indeed, has this indigenous system of instruction proved to be that it has been adopted by the British authorities as the basis of Burmese education—no mean tribute of appreciation.

Furthermore, the monks of Burma exhibit none of the priest's jealous exclusiveness. Though not given to proselytism, they realize that there is room in heaven for other men besides themselves, and they readily welcome into their ranks any stranger—a liberality of which European adventurers eagerly avail themselves, and the sight is not uncommon of a broken-down drunkard from the West seeking the wherewithal to quench his spirituous yearnings in the company of the fallen saints of the East.

Not long ago such a neophyte was found hatless, speechless, and senseless under a tree in West Rangoon. When he recovered sufficient consciousness to crawl, he applied at the neighbouring *kyaung* for admission to the monastic Order. His request was granted without delay, and the representative of European civilization woke up to find himself a yellow priest of Buddha. Unfortunately,

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a respectable Burman heard of this conversion, and, as a result of his efforts on behalf of Buddha's reputation, the newly-fledged monk was stripped of his orange toga and put into the *pothado* robe instead; but the change of raiment effected no corresponding change in character, and the neophyte continues a favourite disgrace to the brotherhood. In the same *kyaung* there are other riotous Europeans, enjoying the hospitality of the monks and sharing their revels; but they are only lay brethren in spirits.

Such is the standard of sacerdotal morality in some of the convents of Rangoon at the present hour. In this respect, at all events, the East has nothing to learn from the West.

But the sensuality of a few among its priests seldom affects the piety of the people. The Burmese are an essentially religious race of men, and Rangoon is the citadel of a very exhilarating form of Buddhism, tempered by spirit-worship, which has its centre in this famous pagoda of the Shwe Dagon, with its lofty crown of gold, on which the sun-rays linger early and late, diffusing over the city a light which is not entirely of this world. The air of Rangoon is at times as full of rumours, portents, and omens as was the air of ancient Rome on the eve of great events. Not very long ago a tiger strayed from the open country into the middle of the town, and, alarmed by the crowds, it climbed up the wavy tiers of the pagoda, where it was shot dead. The phenomenon produced a deep impression on the susceptible Burmese mind. 'Surely,' everyone whispered unto everyone else, 'there is more in this than meets the eye,' and the soothsayers were busy.

Among the myriad interpretations, the most generally accepted was the one which described the brute's visit as a hint that the lower parts of the pagoda, which are bare, should be immediately covered with leaf of gold down to the spot where the tiger had stood. But the hint was ignored, and the people blamed the trustees of the temple

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for their culpable negligence of so plain a premonition sent by the gods. This negligence filled the pious with mysterious apprehensions, which found utterance in the dark prophecy: 'The tiger, then the lightning.' Everyone repeated the oracle with misgiving, because none could tell what it meant.

But not many moons waxed and waned ere the meaning flashed from heaven. The pagoda was struck by lightning on the very spot where the tiger had stood. Nor was this all. When the lightning 'paid homage' to the pagoda, as the pious euphemistically described the disaster, some plates of copper fell down, and the name for copper in the Burmese tongue is *gyi*. 'What is in a name?' says the sceptic, jesting. But wait, my friend of little understanding, and you will see. During the same storm, in addition to the pagoda, was struck the cook of the Dufferin Hospital, and his name was O Zah Gyi. Lastly, on the same day, not far from the hospital, five crows were killed, and the name for a crow is *gyi*. Now know that the sound *gyi* comprehensively means 'great, portentous,' and then tell me if the three synchronous calamities do not constitute a portent.

The best authorities were at once consulted, and unanimously responded: 'Woe unto Rangoon, her sons, and her daughters, if the shrine of Shwe Dagon be not forthwith clothed in gold from the top down to the spot where the tiger stood and the lightning struck. If this warning is also disregarded, the city shall be afflicted by a water famine which shall beget the twin pests of small-pox and plague. The first shall sweep off one-third of the population, the second shall mow down another third, and the remainder, shrunk to skin and bones, shall wander over the empty city, among the dead, like the unhappy ghosts of those who die in sin. All these things shall come to pass if the pagoda be not immediately given a coat of gold.' The pagoda was not given such a coat, and the city was visited by the twin pests, which still afflict the poorer quarters, despite the various exorcisms

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of Hindu, Chinese, and Burmese priests, and the official persecution of rats.

We leave the dusk of the pagoda and its spiritual atmosphere and pass out into the fresh air and the sun. We meet Burmese school boys and girls with their books under their arms and cigarettes in their mouths, walking gaily home, and under a banyan-tree in a grove by the roadside we see a youth and a maiden reclining side by side in two couches naturally formed by the serpentine stems of the tree. He is a mere boy and she, no longer a little girl, not yet a little woman, but in that stage of tremulous semi-consciousness which, in Burma as elsewhere, marks the hour that divides the deep slumber of childhood from the tumultuous awakening of the feminine soul to the realities and the joys of life.

Yet a while and her ears will be pierced ready to receive the rings of wedlock, and she will have to go, demure and alone, to the temple, to register such vows as maidens make and, maybe, to lift timidly one of the wishing-stones which I have seen in the Shwe Dagon Pagoda. In lifting the stone you express a wish, the realization or not of which depends on the lightness or heaviness which you feel in replacing it. These things she will do day after day, and many prayers will she murmur until he has come in whom all prayers find their fulfilment, and the flower vanishes in the fruit. Meanwhile she reclines under the shade of yon banyan-tree by the roadside, flirting frankly with her friend. Verily, if there be on earth such a region as a fairyland its name is Burma. But I am no Theocritus, and it would ill become me to rival Mr. Swinburne.

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CHAPTER XVIII

ON THE ROAD TO MANDALAY

RANGOON and its illuminations are behind us. Presently the only part of the city visible from the railway carriage is the golden Shwe Dagon Pagoda, a pillar of yellow light, shining weirdly against the black night. Now even that beacon has died out, and we dash noisily through the palpable darkness of the open country.

The trees rise dimly from the fields, and here and there a wood fire glows red. Up above throng the stars—a mighty host marching westward, slow, majestic, silent. Here they scintillate in groups, there they gleam in solemn isolation. Some burn with a steady, penetrating brilliance which pierces your very soul, others twinkle in unison with your own thoughts.

Then a white light suffuses the sky-line faintly. It grows and glows. Suddenly a sickle of gold emerges above the eastern hills, and the round face of the moon soars into the heavens.

The stars have sunk around her, extinguished by a diviner light, and she floats in the serenity of the night alone, detached from the blue depths beyond, suspended in the void. The blades of the palms glint keen and curved like the edges of scimitars, the village pagodas loom spectral from amidst the thatched roofs, and the cattle sleep in the moonlit meadows.

When the train stops, the cricket's chirp is heard through the solitude of the night, supreme—permeating all, haunting all, giving a voice to the moonlight. It is

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On the road to Mandalay.

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melancholy, dreamy, and infinite, like all the songs of the East. It sounds as if it had been ringing from the beginning, and were destined to go on ringing to the end of time. 'Tch, tch, tch,' it seems to din into your ear the eternity and, under all variations, essential sameness of things. At first it irritates, then it depresses, but in the end it dominates you. Struggle as you will, you are doomed to succumb to the fatal strain, and thought gradually fades into dream. . . .

The sun is up. On the east a chain of massive blue mountains crawls along the horizon. On the west spreads the plain—a vast garden of golden field and green forest, with the palms fanning and the pinnacles of countless pagodas piercing the blue sky. Here and there we pass clusters of cottages, nestling among the trees, their thatches pointed, their walls of plaited bamboo. They all stand high on posts; for, if India dreads the drought, Burma is the favourite victim of deluge.

Large tracts along the banks of the Irrawaddy yonder have recently been washed clean of their rice crops, and others lie fallow on account of cattle disease. The regions on either side of this railway line are now in receipt of eleemosynary aid; and yet the land and her people, to the superficial observer, betray not the least sign of distress. The former is green with the crops of to-morrow, or yellow with those of yesterday; the latter smile with the chastened gaiety of the East.

Here are little brown Burmans bathing in the wayside ponds, boys and girls floating together in the sunlight, among the white lotus and the other blossoms of the water. There a group of grown-up women fill their pitchers from the river, and then march proudly off—a procession of little fairy queens, each with a round vessel on her erect head; and the cattle are the sleekest I have ever seen. Yes, despite periodical inundation and occasional disease, the country presents a picture of tranquil rural happiness such as would have made glad the heart of my friend Theocritus. The Old Resident complains

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of taxation. He tells me that the Government squeezes all classes of the people with painful impartiality.

'But,' I protest, 'they look so contented!'

'Oh,' he admits reluctantly, 'they are happy—in comparison with their former condition.'

And he grudgingly informs me that since 1893 the population of the Irrawaddy delta has been multiplying so rapidly that a new administrative district had to be created last year, and two new townships have sprung into being; that agricultural settlements are daily reclaiming waste land; and, according to the officials at all events, there is no checking the rapid progress of a province whose prosperity is eloquently witnessed by the income-tax returns.

This Pindaric ode requires, of course, unofficial toning down. But the Old Resident is inclined to be just according to his lights. 'If the people are not quite so well off as the Government would have us believe,' he says, 'the fault is partly theirs.'

He tells me that an official has recently visited a large area affected by scarcity, and found the people possessing pigs, goats, and fowls, which they would on no account sell, while they were glad enough to receive as a free gift all the rice presented to them.

'It is difficult,' says the prosaic Old Resident, 'to sympathize with men who prefer to starve rather than part with their domestic animals.'

He speaks as if these people were ordinary peasants! They are not. Like all noblemen in embarrassed circumstances, they would rather die than declare their poverty to the world by selling their cherished pets. The Old Resident cannot see the romantic side of things, and brands these people as foolish and lazy rascals, abundantly deserving their lot.

The truth is that the scarcity from which they are suffering is in some measure due to their own improvidence and acute disinclination for plebeian labour. These are precisely the qualities which prompt certain

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novelists to choose their heroes from amongst the haughty, hungry, and happy dons of Spain. I fail to see how an attitude of mind which we admire in a Castilian prince can be condemned in the Karen peasant.

For my own part, I require no other evidence of the high stage of civilization already attained by these interesting folk, under British tutelage, than the *taungya* system of cultivation of which large numbers of the hill peasants are so fond. It consists in burning a hillside clean of the jungle, and planting it with paddy, cotton, tobacco, and vegetables, in such quantities as are sufficient for the day. After a few seasons, when the surface of the soil is exhausted, this spot is deserted, and another is chosen, burnt, planted, and deserted. It is a simple process, and in perfect accord with Nature. It is the Burmese conception of the Simple Life.

The same suggestion of Arcadian simplicity is conveyed by the statistics of mortality caused by wild animals. The Government spends some 30,000 rupees a year in rewards for the destruction of such enemies. None the less, the number of persons annually killed in Burma by beasts of prey and snakes is over 1,000, and that of cattle over 12,000. The Old Resident, however, is by no means impressed by these figures.

'Considering the enormous area of jungle in the province and the careless way in which the Burmese look after their cattle when in the pastures,' he says, 'it is surprising that the number of deaths is so small.'

But when not interfered with the Burman is capable of living almost for ever. One hundred and a hundred and twenty years are quite common ages. Sometimes he even carries his longevity to the extreme of indecency.

At this moment, for instance, there lives in Lemyethna a beggar said to be no more nor less than two hundred years of age. According to his own account, he is a Shan by birth. He cannot remember when he was born, but he was about ten years old when he left his native land to follow in the steps of a holy monk, whom he met on the

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platform of a pagoda. His subsequent career had better be given in his own words:

'I travelled together with the holy man for nearly eighty years, and the places and mountains we had been to were considerable. On many occasions he took me to the sacred temples in Ceylon and India. He lived upon fruits only, and, failing to get me to do likewise, good-naturedly served me with duly cooked rice and curry. How he could get them at all times and places I could never conjecture. Every day he gave me something in the shape of medicine to take, saying that it would prolong my life. One day we were resting in a *zayat*, and, being thirsty, I went to a well in the vicinity to drink water. On my return to the *zayat* after about a "betelchew" in period of time, he was not to be seen. All efforts made to find him bore no fruit. But at night I was told in a dream that I should not exert myself to find him, that he was gone to a place inaccessible to human beings, and that I should not be afraid of anything now, as I could get easily into the big towns. So, on the following morning, I lost no time in repairing to the nearest village, which I afterwards found to be Moktama. It was during the time of the first Burmese War (A.D. 1824) when I reached Rangoon, and I must then have been over one hundred years old.'

The Old Resident, with perhaps pardonable scepticism, verified this statement by independent inquiries, in the course of which he came across a man, now ninety years of age, who declared that he was a baby of five-and-twenty when he first saw the old Shan in these parts, adding that since then he could perceive no change in the ancient beggar's appearance. He seems to be as vigorous as ever, carrying home his own rice, frequently walking a distance of sixteen miles in four hours, and satisfying his few wants by the practice of medicine, for he enjoys the reputation of being the master of an elixir which has kept him so long in this world, and which may keep others also.

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He, it is true, is a native of the semi-wild Shan Hills. But even in the less primordial plains one sometimes meets with examples of general behaviour which can only be described as fit for a lunatic asylum.

Only a few months ago a man committed a double murder in—a dream. The accident occurred thus: In a small hut in the village of Nabayibu lived Maung So Bon and his two nieces. On the full moon of Thadingyui, when all good Buddhists rejoice in the Pavarana festival, Maung So Bon purchased a fowl for the evening meal. His nieces protested against the shedding of blood on such a holy day, but their protests were of no avail, and the fowl was killed and eaten. Before the meal the nieces begged their uncle to offer food to the *nat*, or guardian spirit, of their field, according to immemorial custom. But Maung So Bon angrily refused, saying that the *nat* had never done his ancestors or himself any good, and why should he feed it?

Half an hour after the meal Maung So Bon began to feel very uncomfortable, but the girls prepared some cooling substance and rubbed his skin with it, and this relieved the pain. Maung So Bon went to bed early and dreamed that he had become a king, but that two policemen barred his way to the throne. This was more than he could stand, so he seized his *dah* and began to attack his sleeping nieces under the impression that they were the two policemen. He slashed them so savagely with his *dah* that both speedily succumbed, and Maung So Bon returned to his bed, still sleeping.

Shortly afterwards he awoke to find the mangled bodies of his nieces and himself covered with blood. He proceeded to the village *lugyi* and, handing over his *dah*, begged the man to cut him down, as he had unwittingly killed the two beings he loved most.

The Burmese explain the incident by saying that the deed was perpetrated under the baneful influence of the slighted field spirit, and as a punishment for the crime of killing and eating a fowl on such a holy day.

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After these sober facts what need for me to unfold the wonderful old wives' tales of 'the Burmese girl who became a statue' or of 'the Lily Princess who married a mortal,' and all the other precious gems of avowed anile lore that I have in my possession?

The Burmese, thrice-fortunate beggars, still move in the mythopoetic age. Their everyday life is a fairy tale. Their marvellous faculty for confusing fact with fancy is the most engaging trait in their character, and the best excuse for their sins. They belong to the times when everyone rhymed and no one reasoned. They are heroes, hot-headed, hot-blooded, unpractical, and impracticable, like those of Homer, and their unveracity is as multicoloured and charming as their garments. It is a gift of the prodigal sun of the East—that past master of splendid mendacity and prince of all poetry and intemperance.

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CHAPTER XIX

MANDALAY

It was in this philosophically tolerant frame of mind that I reached Mandalay—a great city scattered at the foot of a wood-clad hill, which stands detached from the eastern range as though with the special object of supplying Mandalay with a background and a name. It is a new city, built on strictly mathematical lines by the father of the last King, who lost his crown and his capital to the British twenty years ago. This is the official history of the affair: 'The aggressive attitude of the King of Upper Burma, and his obstinate refusal to redress the wrongs done by his servants to British subjects, compelled Lord Dufferin, at the close of 1885, to send an expeditionary force to Mandalay. The King was dethroned, and deported for safe custody to British India.' Upper Burma was annexed by the proclamation of January 1, 1886, and one of the Burmese pagodas was taken bodily to Calcutta, where it now stands in a public garden for the admiration of black nurses and their white charges.

Poor deported majesty! He dwelt in this square fort, situated in the centre, precisely, of his capital. It is an enclosure of red-brick walls, low and loose, surmounted at intervals by watch-towers of dark wood, most efficient as ornamental kiosks, most useless for any other purpose. And both walls and kiosks and the trees which shoot above them are at this moment mirrored in the still waters of the broad moat which enframes this habitation of a royalty that has failed.

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How could it help failing? I wander through the palace—a number of great wooden dovecots raised on posts, each pointed roof and cornice festooned with delicate lace, now all awry; pillars and walls and ceilings all covered with gold leaf, now faded; doorways, elaborately carved and gilt, and toy staircases, leading from one windowless apartment into another, and everywhere minute mirrors glittering through the gloom. It is all pretty, suffocating, ginger-bready, and now, in its desertion, profoundly sad.

I walk from one empty hall to another, and they all are fast asleep amid the trees of the park and the still, lotus-sprinkled ponds, none disturbing their silence but the carols of the birds and the wheels of the visitor's carriage as it crunches over the gravel. And, as I wander to and fro about these abodes of an extinguished splendour, I notice that one of them is now used as a museum, another forms part of Government House, a third serves as a club.

In the grounds of Government House there is a garden-party, and among the guests assembled to greet the Prince and Princess of Wales I see many ladies of the ex-royal family—elderly matrons, full of memories and wrinkles, telling their beads of resignation, and tender maidens born since the fall of their greatness. They are all attired in the splendid simplicity of the Burmese woman, and they preserve the statuesque decorum befitting their birth. In Burma she is most highly bred who is most like an image of Buddha.

They sit composedly in a square, and, as they shake hands with the Prince and Princess, they smile the inscrutable smile of the East. It is pathetic that high gifts, intellectual and æsthetic, like those of the Burmese, should so often be accompanied by an utter incompetence to defend them. There seems to be a brutal law, unwritten and unrelenting, that those who can feel must serve those who can fight. We live in the iron age.

But a truce to sentimentality. It is morning, and I sally forth to see how the common people of Mandalay

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BURMESE MAIDENS CARRYING WATER, MANDALAY.

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begin the day. The town is a great chess-board of rectangles, in which the light bamboo houses rest on posts like thousands of bathing-sheds strayed inland, each habitation surrounded by a bamboo fence daintily festooned with flowering shrubs.

And amidst these indigenous dwellings rises the brick and mortar of the foreign interloper—solid, prosaic, and, like its owner, contemptuous of all that is aerial and unprofitably beautiful. These are stains on the landscape, accentuating the qualities which they despise, and I ignore them as I go down the broad, straight, tamarind-shaded streets, now mildly astir with the banalities of life.

In the courtyard behind each bamboo fence burns a small wood fire, and over it simmers the breakfast pot. Close by squats the housewife or her daughter, puffing quietly at her morning cheroot.

In one shop I see two men grinding corn under a millstone attached to a long pole, and from another issue last night's fumes of opium, stale and repulsive, like all orgies of last night.

Brown glossy goats roam about, browsing on the grass by the roadside; black pigs roll in beatific squalor; and the girls comb their black tresses in the doorways, or draw water from the wells at the corners of the streets.

But the most interesting figure in the whole panorama, and the most frequent, is the orange-robed monk who has left his cell early to forage among the faithful. He stops at any house he likes, and the housewife fills his round bowl with rice. He embraces the bowl and walks away, hugging it to his breast, and the pariah dogs follow close behind, tugging at the holy one's robe.

The most favoured among them need not even carry their breakfast. A little boy carries it for them—two scales suspended from an artistically-curved beam. One of the scales is a large tray containing a number of small bowls, the other is one great bowl, and to both are fastened trivets intended to support the dishes over the fire.

I follow a number of these saints to their home of holy

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idleness—the great Arakan Pagoda, which tapers into the blue heavens, culminating in three superimposed tiaras of gilded iron, the symbol of the Buddhist Trinity. It reminds one of things which one had hoped one had left behind in the West; but otherwise, in common with everything Burmese, this triple crown of glittering metal is deliciously unsubstantial, and, what I like even better, wholly unaggressive. It seems to tinkle gently: 'Take me or leave me. There is no missionary zeal or other petty sadness about me. I know that there is more than one road to heaven.'

And, in truth, the pagoda may well despise vulgar proselytism. Though the spirit of doubt is abroad, it is as yet a spirit that can be ignored. Revelation still rules over the Burmese mind; speculative discontent is as yet unknown to it, and the theological interpretation of things is the only interpretation acceptable to it. Sky and heaven still are synonymous terms here, and the air, woe is me, is dense with demons.

Only two months ago the Archbishop of Mandalay sent forth an encyclical, announcing to the people of Burma that this year will bring upon them famine, pestilence, and other gifts, and therefore beseeching all true believers throughout the land to raise in each town and village a pagoda 7½ feet in diameter with twelve gradations, and to make in each place an offering to a hundred holy men, after the manner of the old Kings of Burma, assuring them that if this is done the anticipated sorrows may yet be averted. Nor did the Archbishop prophesy in vain. For is not the miraculous an everyday occurrence here?

In the enclosure of this pagoda I see a middle-sized elephant of cast iron, its fat little tusks smooth with the handling of millions, and the Old Resident explains that it is the best cure for toothache. Close by stand some giants of cast iron, and their breasts, navels, and knees are equally well worn, for by rubbing them well you safeguard yourself against the ailments pertaining to the respective parts of the body. There also are, of course,

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wishing-stones, which I lift with a most hopeful facility, though, I am assured, there are pious people over whose muscles imagination has so strong a hold that, if in a desponding mood, they find it impossible to move the stones at all!

In the temple itself I pass between the usual stalls of acrobatic dolls and flowers, of gongs, elephant bells, candles, etc., and I reach the holy of holies: a narrow, smoke-begrimed cell, with a great bronze Buddha sitting on a pedestal in the middle, his body covered with gold, his conical headgear scintillating with precious stones. His face is honestly brazen, and he looks down serenely upon me.

Then I find my way out again, and, leaving a great crowd of smaller pagodas on one hand, each guarded by monsters and human figures not incapable of seeing a joke, I enter the monastery which stands on the opposite side. I enter through a narrow aperture between the two leaves of a great wooden gate, one of which has lost its hinges and is supported by a beam. In the enclosure I find many kiosks raised on posts, each kiosk provided with a balcony and a low door, through which the orange monks creep on all fours. The irreverent simile at once afflicts me of a colony of kennels. Ordinary dogs there are, also, in great numbers, roaming over the courtyard below and snarling suspiciously at me. There are fowls, too, and among them I observe two cocks fighting in a most worldly fashion for a highly unascetic prize.

But the monks are good, and they smile upon me in a reassuring manner. Cheerful they are not. How can he be cheerful who has renounced the world? Yet their faces exhibit none of the dismalness of their creed, if the latter may be judged by the pictures which stare on the walls of the pagoda. Most of these are coloured representations of hell, innocent of perspective, but otherwise elaborately horrid. In one I observe a group of souls dragged by black demons to torment. Let us follow their career. They are stretched on the ground and carefully

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flayed. They lie for a while with their skins spread out and nailed to the earth. Further on I find them speared by the demons and pitched into flaming lakes, where they weep amid the broad leaves and white blossoms of the lotus. In another picture the sinners are boiling in a great pot over a fire, which is fed with their fellow-sinners, and near the pot stands a demon keeping both pot and fire supplied. In conception as well as in execution there is something startlingly familiar about these works of infernal art. I suddenly recall that I have seen their exact parallels on the walls of Byzantine monasteries. There is nothing new even under the earth.

And yet I leave Burma with a feeling akin to regret:

'A pleasing land of drowsy-head it was,
Of dreams that wave before the half-shut eye,
And of gold temples in the clouds that pass,
For ever flushing round a summer sky.'

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CHAPTER XX

MADRAS

We have once more crossed the blue bay on whose waves the flying-fishes play, and we are in Southern India, the home of the elephant and of perennial summer. We landed at Madras—a level expanse of red brick, white stucco, and green foliage, spreading indefinitely along the dull coast-line on both sides of the mouth of the river Cooum, a mouth kept locked by the sands of the sea—so low lies the land on which sleeps the city of Madras. It is a city of considerable mediocrity, owing its birth to Fort St. George, founded in 1640 by an Agent of the East India Company on a spot which once belonged to a subject of the decadent Raja of Chandragiri. Round this flat citadel there grew a flat colony of Europeans, called the White Town, in contradistinction from the native, or Black Town, which gradually sprang up to the north of the fort. These old settlements, with the adjacent rural suburbs, constitute collectively this great, stupid city of Southern India, with the crooked Cooum meandering through the middle of it aimlessly. Let us do likewise.

I step into one of the dozen rickshaws which assaults me as soon as I appear in the street, and set forth through the sun. There are trees on both sides of the street, but their sole purpose seems to be to afford shade to the crows, which haunt their foliage, filling the hot air with their hoarse cawing.

And so the rickshaw rolls on, and I in it. It is not a very dignified conveyance, this two-wheeled perambulator, and it makes one feel partly babyish and partly brutish.

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The latter feeling is due to the black, long-legged youth who trots between the shafts, a small piece of red cloth tightly drawn round his loins, his back glittering with beads of perspiration. But *he* does not seem to consider the part of a draught animal unworthy of a human biped, and I smile at my own quixotism as I see many fellow-sahibs rolling in their rickshaws unblushingly. In this fashion I reach the quarters of my pony's people and perspire through them, collecting what my platitudinarian friend calls 'interesting impressions.'

All the men appear to have turned into women: their long raven hair gathered at the back into a knot *à la grecque*, their ears pierced with rings. But these are the gentlemen of Madras. The lower classes are content with a white loin-cloth and a black skin. Here is one of them, a long bamboo stick across his shoulders, with two round pitchers swinging from either end. Next comes a carrier of higher rank, turbaned and white-tunicked, a skin bucket in one hand, with the other leading a long-horned bullock, which sways solemnly under two great water-skins. A little way off a musician, dishevelled and ragged, sits by the roadside, blowing at a flute inserted into one nostril. It is not surprising that the music is nasal. Lower down I see a group of coolies on the ground, turning spinning-wheels. Further off squats a naked potter on his haunches, with one finger on the lip of a jar, whirling it into shape. And here is the everlasting snake-charmer, shrill *kalabash* in mouth, a number of cobras coiled in front of him, and his accomplice beating the dull tom-tom beside him. He is a man of many tricks, some extraordinarily clever, others too crude to earn him even the admiration of an American tourist.

Nor are the women idle. Here I see two of them standing up with enormous pestles in their hands, pounding rice in a stone mortar; there a solitary matron kneels down, crushing curry on a marble slab with a heavy roller of marble; and further off two maids, with red patches of questionable beauty between their black brows, are grind-

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ing wheat between two millstones, to the accompaniment of a monotonous chant, perchance not unlike the mill-song which the maidens of Lesbos sang in the days of old.

It is one of those strains, weary and weird, which for the Western ear possess no melody, save the melody of an infinite sadness. You hear the wail first in the Balkans; it pursues you through Greece, Egypt, and Syria unto the utmost confines of India. The words vary; the cadence, in the main, is the same. It is the song of the East—the dirge of an ancient dame lamenting her long-departed youth and its divine illusions. It is a song full of a mournful, unutterable dreariness, and it puts me in mind of Lord Avebury's 'Pleasures of Life.'

In that hymn, so spiritless, so tuneless, and so endless, I hear the servitude of millions—millions of men and women who have learnt in suffering what they try to express in song, and fail so pathetically; immemorial ages of abject slavery and ruthless tyranny—ages of stunted manhood and of dull, silent endurance—striving to speak in one dreamy, plaintive note. But the singer is apparently happy. And that, after all, is the main thing.

There are among these people worshippers of Vishnu, the all-preserver, and worshippers of Siva, the all-destroyer, the former distinguished by the vertical trident—one red prong between two white—painted on the brow; the latter by many white stripes painted on brow and breast and arms horizontally. There are also worshippers of Allah—men in fezes, who, I hear, revere the Sultan of Turkey as their pontiff, and take a profound and unintelligent interest in the Macedonian question. They are not picturesque.

Fortunately, here is a temple tank in which thousands of Hindus are bathing, for holiness rather than for health; not to clean the body, but to purify the soul. The rite consists of three parts: plunging into the water, drinking a few drops, and washing the loin-cloth in it, each act

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being scrupulously accompanied by the gestures and prayers consecrated by the tradition of æons. Ablutions over, the bather carefully disfigures his brow with the respective mark of his sect, or with a simple red dot. Should he, after this ceremony, pollute himself by contact with the unclean, he must undergo a new purification. Thus cleanliness develops into a mania and godliness into misanthropy.

In the course of my perambulation I pass by many an open, tile-roofed cottage, the lintel of which is armed with a string of mangosa leaves—averters of evil—and the walls are pierced with small triangular niches intended for the lamps which are lighted on the feast of Dewali. I begin to think that I have at last reached the heart of Hinduism, genuine and unalloyed, when I perceive over the niches on either side of a mangosa-armed door the sign of the cross. It reminds me that among these black Madrasis there are many Christians, autochthonous and curious, some claiming spiritual descent from the sceptical apostle Thomas, others tracing their salvation to ancient heretics, Manichæan or Nestorian, and still paying homage to the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch. But this old stream has received many tributaries from the West in more recent times, through the Jesuit missionaries of Madura and St. Francis Xavier, who is revered by the Madras fishermen as their patron saint. There are Protestant communities, too, small in number and rich in nothing but hope, yet sufficient to add to the bewilderment of the native soul, sorely at a loss in face of so many apostles, who have only one thing in common—a profound inability to understand each other's doctrine. It is, therefore, not to be wondered at that the Christianity of Madras is of a highly picturesque character.

As in Europe, so here, the Church has prudently adopted the gods whom she proved unable to expel, and many an ancient idol survives under a new name. This is especially the case with the communities of old standing.

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They flourish in proportion to their adaptability. But neophytes are almost as rare as unicorns. Most of the modern converts are children, or the children of children, rescued from famine and, pardonably enough, brought up in the faith of their preservers.

Hunger, indeed, everywhere in India seems to be the most potent instrument of enlightenment. It is the one theological argument that appeals to the native mind, and it is deeply to be regretted that the Government, by striving to abolish this ancient institution, favours the interests of humanity at the expense of sound divinity.

In addition to persons who are too young or too hungry to argue, there are occasional proselytes from among the outcasts of Hindu society. Those who have nothing to lose in heaven sometimes think it worth their while to improve their condition on earth. With this object in view they embrace a creed which recognises no distinction of caste or colour—in theory. The results are interesting. The Old Resident tells me that a servant belonging to this class embodies in his person the villainies of all his neighbours, while he is severely purged of their virtues, and is a person scrupulously avoided, not only by his own prejudiced fellow-countrymen, but also by the European residents, including the missionaries themselves, who in matters temporal prefer to deal with the heathen.

I have recently had an opportunity of fathoming the cause of this strange inconsistency. The Hindu servant of a friend of mine received the other day from his wife a letter in which the lady threatened that, if he delayed much longer sending her money, she would be reluctantly compelled to turn a Christian or a priestess of the demotic Aphrodite.

Now and again these earnest seekers after truth succeed in raising theology to the height of the picturesque. In the latest report of the work of the United Free Church of Scotland Missions in Madras, one of the workers tells of a pariah lady who adopted an exceptionally subtle

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method of coming to a decision in her choice of a creed. She had been a zealous worshipper of her own gods for many years, but when she heard of the new religion she determined to give it a fair trial. So she set a hen upon a number of eggs, and vowed that if, when they were hatched, the chickens were found to be cocks, she would continue to worship her own gods, but if they were hens she would adopt the gods of Europe. They providentially turned out hens.

Beneath this crust of Christianity, ancient or modern, of Hinduism and Mahomedanism, there extend abysmal and hitherto unexplored layers of belief which go back to the dateless ages long before Christ, Brahma, or Mahomed were heard of. The invasion of each new light has, as usually happens, resulted in the invigoration of the older realms of darkness. The greater deities were destroyed or disguised, but the lesser gods, too obstinate for conciliation and too powerful for extermination, have gone to swell the ranks of primitive demons.

You observe that more especially as you move further and further from the centre of the city towards the outlying suburbs. The streets develop into roads lined by green rice-fields and palm-groves, amid which nestle clusters of primordial huts thatched with loose dry leaves. The inmates plait baskets outside or idle candidly among their pigs. As you go on you see here a peasant tilling the soil with the rudest of ploughs, and there another climbing up a palm-tree collecting toddy in an earthenware jug. These black people, with matted hair, stout of limb and thick of lip, belong to the dark races known as Dravidian, whatever the term may mean.

Aryan, Moghul, and Mahratta came, conquered, and went away, and the Dravidian peasant has remained through all vicissitudes the same, rooted to the soil and to his Tamil and Telugu tongues and traditions. His immobility is curiously shown by two little things: King Solomon's peacocks are in the Hebrew Scriptures

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mentioned by the Tamil name, and the word for 'rice' in all the languages of Europe has its origin in the same uncouth tongue.

The ordinary Hindu's theory as to the origin of this mysterious folk is derived from the 'Ramayana,' in which the monkey tribes are described as assisting the god Rama in his struggle with Rawana, the ten-headed demon King of Ceylon. This lively legend is popularly regarded as commemorating the conversion, such as it was, of these poor Dravidian tribes to the new faith. Educated Hindus do not, however, share this prejudiced view. They argue that the individuals mentioned in the epic, though appearing simian to Aryan eyes, were really human beings, inhabiting the jungle land of Southern India, whence they were gradually displaced by the Aryan invaders. The conquerors, naturally enough, depicted these poor children of the soil in the blackest colours, for they found them hostile to their own cult and inclined to disturb the Brahmani hermits in their devotions. They also found them to be enthusiastic eaters of meat. What wonder, then, asks my rationalist Hindu friend, if they ridiculed their features and libelled their characters? Thus, the Dravidians, hitherto maligned by orthodox faith, threaten to be rehabilitated by scepticism.

Whatever their origin may be, these dark pre-Aryan men preserve, among the countless gods which Hinduism annexed on its southward progress, and which are now worshipped as members of the Vishnu or Siva family, or as incarnations of the one or the other, all the fetishes of their antediluvian fathers, and all their veneration for natural forces in its crudest form. Here, under that tree, close to the bank of the river, you may see a figure bent in adoration before a mound of earth, which he drenches with a libation of milk, and adorns with cocoanuts and camphor and other good things—offerings to the snake supposed to dwell beneath the mound.

It is one out of a thousand rites, most of which have for their object the propitiation of the spirits of disease.

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But it is not only the physician who suffers from divine competition in this part of India. The gods here still perform a variety of functions which in civilized lands have long been usurped by other officials. For instance, the goddess Kulanthai-amman enjoys an immense and most lucrative practice as collector of bad debts. If you cannot recover the money which you have lent, all that you need do is to record your claim on a scroll of palmyra leaves, and to promise the goddess a share of the sum when it is paid. This offer being duly registered in the archives of heaven, you proceed to hang the scroll up on an iron spear in the enclosure of your heavenly partner's temple. Says the Old Resident: 'If the claim is just, and the debtor does not pay, he will be afflicted with sickness and bad dreams. If, however, he disputes the claim, he draws up a counter-statement and hangs it on the same spear. Then the deity decides which claim is true, and afflicts with sickness and bad dreams the man who has lied. The goddess may sometimes make a mistake, but, at any rate, the process is cheaper than an appeal to an ordinary court of law, and probably not less effective as a means of securing justice.'

For the rest, the Dravidian peasant's daily life is largely made up of love and murder, thus proving that he is a genuine, if somewhat queer, member of the human race, and not, as mendacious legend pretends, a monkey. Does not man spend one half of his energy in the reproduction of his species and the other half in its destruction?

But the Dravidian, besides this ordinary passion for killing, differentiating man from the lower animals, exhibits in its gratification a cold-blooded impartiality which raises him above the common herd of humanity. Numerous illustrations of this superiority are to be found in the official reports of the Chemical Examiner to the Government of Madras. In many parts of the province murder is so regular a feature of religious festivals that the authorities have to issue periodical warnings to pilgrims to protect themselves against it. The favourite

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procedure consists in scattering upon the ground, where the fair is held, packets of poisoned sweetmeats. The poisoning of toddy-pots in punishment of those who steal the liquor from the trees is another source of fatal accidents. In one case twenty regular customers at a toddy shop were found affected by aconite, two of them dying of the effects. The toddy-grower in this instance had set a trap for a marauder, and forgotten to remove the poison from the pot before using it for the liquor he was to sell.

Love-philtres concocted of the charred remains of a mouse and a spider, seasoned with arsenic, are not unknown. An example of the perversion of maternal love is to be found in the case of a woman who sent to an undesirable but attractive young person, to whom her son had taken a fancy, a supply of sweetmeats mixed with arsenic and mercurial salts. The recipient of the gift was too experienced in the ways of South Indian mothers to try it upon herself, but callously gave it to a boy, who died from the effects, some poultry which came in for a share of the repast also paying for their greediness by premature dissolution. Another pretty story told by the official recorder is of a young girl found struggling in convulsions under a tree. She had taken a dose of strychnine to avoid marrying an old man who had a wife already. The case of an aged father who killed himself with opium to escape the ill-treatment of ungrateful sons was another dramatic incident which came under his professional observation during the same year. But enough.

I end my tour on the beach, where the waves sparkle in the fading sunlight, kissing the yellow sands. Far away the line which divides sea from sky bristles with dark sails, and here along the shore the bare-skinned fishermen and their womenfolk are mending their nets or overhauling their craft—deep ugly boats with stem and stern pointed alike, the interstices calked with ropes of straw patiently stitched between the planks. Even more primitive is yon catamaran or raft of logs which that

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youth is shoving into the surf. And while the grown-up people are working, their children are playing on the sands, black boys and girls, all innocent of dress, and the white sea-gulls hover up above, in gradually diminishing circles, then dive swiftly after their prey, and the sea goes on, rolling backwards and forwards with a great music. . . .

The breeze has freshened, and the waves in the distance advance, capped with snow. As they draw nearer, their crests curl over, and they rush wildly on, climbing and leaping over one another's shoulders, till they fall exhausted on the beach. And as they rush on, rank after rank, a new foam-crested legion rising where its forerunner lies prostrate, rumbling and roaring, you fancy you hear the cries of a myriad spirits in rebellion, striving to tell the mournful tale of labour without end or visible purpose. But on the land side the sun has sunk behind the palms, and the west has thrown open the golden gates which lead to darkness and to rest.

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On the Beach at Madras.

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CHAPTER XXI

MYSORE

'A BEAUTIFUL and prosperous country, under a clever and promising young ruler,' says my platitudinarian friend ecstatically.

'Yes, a fairly decent Indian State as Indian States go,' concedes the Old Resident cautiously.

For my part, I see a spacious green plateau rising to wood-clothed ridges or sinking into shady ravines, down whose dark depths leap the waters over the boulders, laughing. Here and there stands up a rock of granite, gray, gaunt, and grim, its brow bent sullenly upon fields of bright sugar-cane, coffee, and rice piled up in conical heaps of gold. Here and there also we traverse teak and sandal woods, haunted by the melancholy note of the koel and the music of rushing waters, or we skirt broad pastures over which roam herds of bulls, greatly horned and humped, lowly cows, flocks of shaggy sheep and silly goats, and legions of clumsy buffaloes. At intervals the thatch of a hut peeps shyly through a thick copse of gold mohur, peepul, and banyan, under the arches of which play the long-tailed monkeys; or the tiled roof of a cottage smiles amid the mango and plantain trees of an orchard, while up above sway the slender columns of date and cocoanut palms, sweeping the blue of the sky with their leafy mops; and the air is full of sleepy scents and the songs of strange birds.

The road on either side bristles with the gray-green sabres of the prickly aloe, from whose centre shoots up a colossal stem crowned with bunches of drooping seed;

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and trees and hedges alike are a tangle of creepers blossoming red, purple, white, or yellow.

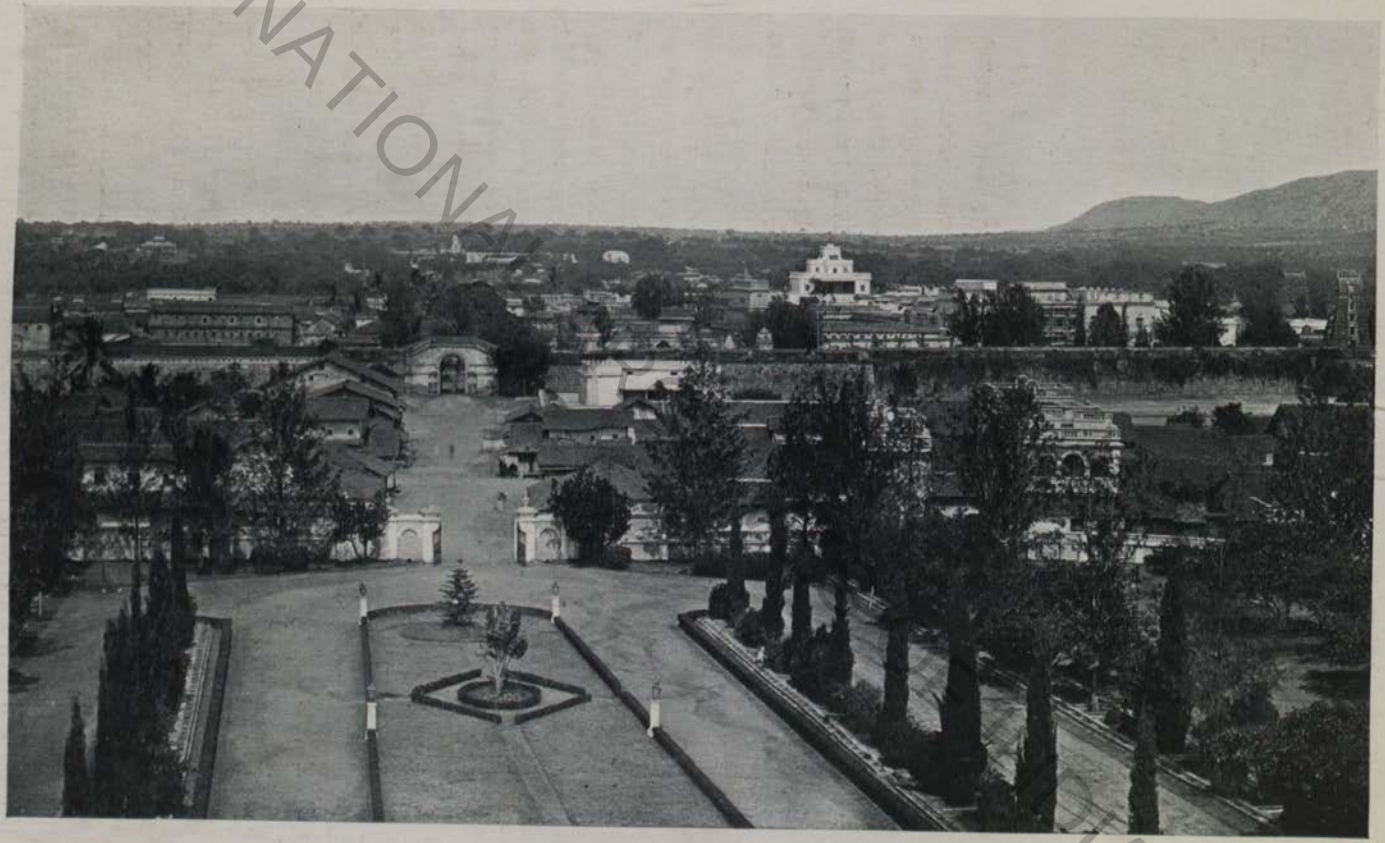
Close to the trunk of many a tree rises a mound of red earth, tall and many pinnacled, marking the habitation of a colony of white ants and their architectural skill, and not far off a flower-decked altar, a phallic symbol, the stone image of a snake, bull, or some other deity, bears witness to the piety of a peasantry which has some reason to be thankful to its gods.

It is a contented-looking population of long-haired men and of women dressed in dark red or yellow veils of many folds, with rings of silver glinting on ear and nose, arms and ankles. Some of these peasants appear to enjoy what in India constitutes prosperity, as is shown by the large vases of yellow brass which their women carry on the left shoulder; but others bear poised on their heads bundles of dry palm boughs and aloe leaves—cheap fuel for the fire which will cook their frugal supper.

Now and again we see on the road a bullock-cart creaking slowly along on round discs of wood—primeval progenitors of our wheels—and under the arched mat which constitutes the roof of the vehicle crouch many dark faces of profound interest to the anthropologist. Yet, though uncouth, these primitive fellow-creatures are not unclean or inactive, for the climate, which, even at this time of year, appears terribly enervating to a European, is for the native neither hot enough to produce lethargy nor cold enough to make washing a penance. They are healthy, too, despite the gruesome 'isolation' camp which greets me at the entrance to the capital. After all, we must all die, and the plague is as good an excuse as any.

The capital forms a curious anomaly on the face of the land. Not quite a village, not quite a city, it consists of a palace, a few public buildings, and several streets of what may be called houses by way of contrast with their next-door neighbours. These are mere unaffected mud huts, with a hole for a window, or even without one. The palace and the chief buildings stand within a square

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THE PALACE IN THE FORT, MYSORE.

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surrounded by feeble walls and, therefore, nicknamed 'fort.'

Inside the same square the Maharaja, not content with this dwelling, whose tawdriness time was beginning to ennoble, is now building a colossal pile of marble, granite, and porphyry, conceived by an English genius and constructed by native prodigality and patience. It will cost, when finished, over thirty lakhs of rupees; but it will not be finished very soon, for I have seen one of the workmen cutting a block of granite with a piece of wire for a saw. He is paid fourpence per square inch, and on every inch he spends one week. Thirty lakhs of rupees for the dwelling of one man, and ninety-nine per cent. of his five million subjects living in mud huts! There is in this distribution of things a quaint sense of proportion which does not fail to impress even the callous Old Resident, who doubts whether any prince, from the wise Solomon to the Kaiser, ever was, soberly speaking, worth so much money to his subjects. He speaks as though a prince existed for his subjects! However, such heretical doubts have never yet occurred to the Maharaja's subjects who cut the stones for his new palace at the rate of one square inch and fourpence a week.

Just opposite this pile rises the Chamundi Hill—a great solitary rock covered imperfectly with stunted weeds, and crowned with a holy shrine, wherein His Highness worships once a year, climbing up the thousand steps of granite which lead to the summit of the hill. I ascended 720 of these steps, till, breath and interest being exhausted, I stopped under the nose of the giant bull of stone who lies couchant at that point upon a large whitewashed pedestal. He is, of course, a sacred bull, much sculptured, necklaced, and otherwise ornamented, and exceedingly black with the smoke of sacrifice. And the steps which lead up to him are worn smooth by myriads of pious and bare feet. Behold the pilgrims: elderly men, with fresh caste-marks on their brows, panting up the 700 steps to pay their devotions to Siva's sacred animal; wrinkled old

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ladies and young girls, their faces and limbs assiduously disfigured with yellow powder; and mothers bearing their naked infants in their arms, all toil up the steps, full of a quiet fervour, and the blind beggars swarm on the landings calling upon the pilgrims for bakshish, and the bull looks down stolidly upon all.

He seems to be more highly revered in this part of India than in any other, and the Old Resident thinks that the name Mysore itself means 'the city of bulls.' Well it may, for, assuredly, there are as many bulls as men in its streets—live bulls roaming at random, and bulls of stone reposing calmly over the doorways of the temples, but none of them is so big or so black as the sacred bull on the Chamundi Hill.

Such is the modern capital of the State of Mysore. Its old capital, Seringapatam, lies ten miles off beside the river Kaveri, which embraces it, or what is left of it—for at the present moment this ancient city, once alive with the noise of 150,000 men and women, is but a village of one main street lined with cottages and poor shops and a few lanes lined with mud huts, the whole still encircled by a ring of walls no longer formidable. From the midst of modern poverty rises the ancient temple of Vishnu, its upper parts covered with sculptures, its lower whitewashed, and in the courtyard outside stands a heavy smoke-begrimed cart, heavily carved, and resting on solid, spokeless wheels. It is, I presume, the chariot on which the god takes his annual drive through the city. Not far from this Hindu shrine stands a Mahomedan mosque built by Tippu Sultan, and in the walls here and there you discern the fragments of Jain temples.

All these things speak of the past of a land famed in story and legend alike. Both the great epics of the 'Ramayana' and the 'Mahabharata' tell how, once upon a time, there reigned here a certain king who had a certain general who aided Rama in his campaign against Lanka. But these things happened, or did not happen, a long time ago. During the first centuries of our era the

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Buddhists tried to sow their seed in this soil, and tradition says that the 'Enlightened' himself preached in this Hindu temple. Later the Jains succeeded where the Buddhists had failed, but their supremacy also passed away, and the gods of India re-established their rule.

Then came the Moghuls, and with them many calamities, out of which sprang a new Hindu dynasty, to fall, after two centuries' sway, before a coalition of four Mahomedan kings, until, in 1610, one of the small chiefs who had meanwhile asserted themselves in various parts of Mysore defeated his rivals, seized this fort of Seringapatam, and founded a family. These new rulers played their game so well that when the Mahrattas were overthrown by the Moghuls they were able to help in plundering the plunderers. In 1687 they purchased from the Moghul Emperors additional territory, and twelve years later they obtained from the Emperor of Delhi the privilege of sitting on an ivory armchair, which still continues to be the emblem of sovereignty in Mysore.

It is of figwood overlaid with ivory, and several steps lead up to the seat on which the old Maharajas of Mysore used to sit for the adoration of their subjects. This armchair has followed all the adventures of the family. In the middle of the eighteenth century the Maharajas of Mysore were forced to yield their armchair to Haidar Ali, whose victory over the British is so humorously depicted in the native paintings preserved in yon old summer-house built by the conqueror's son. He was a great man, Haidar Ali, and his name still lives, not only on the printed page, but on the lips of the people whom he subdued. They have many stories, more or less apocryphal, concerning his birth, his childhood, his conquests, and his death. The Old Resident is full of this local lore, and the following is one of the stories current in Seringapatam itself:

'One evening an astrologer came to the palace, and all the officials clustered round him, anxious to have their fortunes told. Haidar, disguised, joined them, and when the astrologer looked into his hand, he exclaimed that it

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was the hand of a corpse-bearer! Haidar withdrew his hand quickly, and retired for the night in great perturbation of spirit. Next morning, the astrologer was ordered to appear before the great Sultan, and, to his surprise, in the Sultan's hand he recognised the hand he had examined the evening before. He again pronounced it to be the hand of a corpse-bearer. Whereat Haidar was mightily wroth, and threatened the wretched fortune-teller with many ingenious deaths as an impostor. The astrologer defended himself as follows: "What can come from the clouds but rain; what can come from the mountains but the life-giving herb; what can come from under Mother Earth but the all-nourishing seed; and what can come from my ever-victorious lord but the wisdom of his fathers? Truly, the wise shall be rewarded, and the wicked shall be punished. Grant, O King, thy humble servant some beeswax, and he shall soon demonstrate the truth of the science of his ancestors." Haidar granted the astrologer's demand, and the latter pasted the wax in circular patches all over the King's body. Then, taking the patches off one by one, he carefully examined them, and, behold, those patches which had been pasted to the roof of the royal mouth bore the imprints of the regal emblems! "Here are the signs that made my lord the Lord of Mysore," cried out the astrologer triumphantly, and Haidar sent him away loaded with shawls and shekels. So useful it is to be an astrologer.'

After Haidar's death the ivory armchair passed to his son Tippu—stern, sober, and brave defender of the faith—who was so richly endowed with all the virtues and all the vices of a man who mistakes himself for a minister of God's will on earth. No wonder that in hating the British he fancied that he hated the enemies of Heaven, and in fighting them that he defended the kingdom of God from the encroachments of Satan. But the struggle was unequal. Satan prevailed. In 1799 Seringapatam fell, and with it Tippu Sultan, fighting to the last. He fell even here at the gate of his palace, now in ruins, where his

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body was afterwards found under a heap of corpses, and was accorded the honours due to a brave enemy beaten. He lies buried in this great mausoleum, built by himself for his father Haidar. It is a square mosque, with a low minaret at each corner, and a lofty dome in the middle, adorned with doors presented by an English viceroy.

Father and son sleep side by side here amidst the ruins of their capital, and far away, in the capital of their conquerors, may be seen some pathetic memorials of their greatness. Among these are a little dagger, now lying so innocent and impotent in a glass case, with its silver-clothed scabbard, all in rags, once gripped by the mighty Tippu Sultan's hand; his note-book, quaintly illustrated with stiff little soldiers such as one played with in the days of long ago; a volume of his correspondence; a bulky manuscript catalogue of his library; and other things, showing that Tippu was as good a student as he was a soldier.

Among the treasures seized by the British on the capture of Seringapatam there also was the ivory armchair. They found it in a lumber room, and, having covered its ivory with gold and silver, they put upon it the four-year-old representative of the ancient Hindu line. In the restored Raja's minority the State was wisely governed by a Mahratta Brahmin. But when the young Prince assumed the reins, he ran the Mysore horse with a recklessness which induced his patrons to relieve him of all responsibility in the matter, in 1831. For fifty years Mysore remained under British control, and was administered as a British province until 1881, when the native rulers were restored for a second time to their inheritance.

It was, on the whole, a wise step. The Maharaja who was placed on the throne of his ancestors had been taught not to imitate the conduct which had necessitated their deposition. And he showed that the lesson had not been wasted. By his devotion to duty he became a model of a monarch, thus fulfilling the hopes of his well-wishers and confounding those prophets who, confident in the dogma

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that self-government is not good for the man of the East, predicted failure to the experiment.

But it is well to avoid exaggeration and important to see things as they are. The Old Resident, while by no means inclined to minimize the blessings which Mysore owes to the late Maharaja and his Minister, lays stress on the fact that those blessings could not have been secured without the help of British advisers and officials. Even at the present moment, he tells me, though Mysore is nominally an independent State, it is in reality governed by the British Resident and the British gentlemen who fill all the higher posts.

'If the Maharaja does not play at ducks and drakes with the revenues of the State, for example,' he says, 'it is partly because he cannot do so. The revenue of the State amounts to 219 lakhs of rupees. Out of that the Maharaja gets only thirteen lakhs for his civil list; thirty-five lakhs go to the Government of India in payment for protection against aggression from outside; five lakhs are devoted to the Imperial Service Troops, and the rest is spent on the civil administration of the country.'

I ask him whether Mysore is not a constitutionally governed State with a Representative Assembly, a free Press, and a responsible Cabinet of one.

The Old Resident smiles at my simplicity, and explains that the Assembly is not elected, but appointed; that its members have no power to do anything but ask questions; that if a member ventures to display any morbid tendency to criticism, he can be summarily dismissed by the Deputy-Commissioner who appointed him; and that, in brief, the Mysorean Constitution is a great sham.

This is most disheartening, for I had come to Mysore prepared to find a genuine Parliament in embryo, and I find instead a kind of Turkish provincial council. I understood that the Legislative Assembly was intended to legislate, and I find that it is only expected to listen. I also understood that both the Maharaja and his Minister had fully realized the necessity of submitting to public

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criticism and following public opinion. Instead, the Old Resident informs me that a few weeks ago the reporter of a local journal was evicted from the Assembly because his paper had dared to disagree with the Government.

One more illusion broken, O my platitudinarian friend!

A few miles from the capital lies the city of Bangalore, commanded by an old fort which, in the middle of the eighteenth century, was allotted by the Maharaja of Mysore to Haidar Ali as a reward for his bravery in repelling a Mahratta invasion. Haider Ali, however, as we have seen, aimed at higher things, and, with this fort as his base of treason, succeeded in ousting his master from the ivory armchair. During his reign and that of his son Tippu, while Seringapatam was the seat of power, this fort was the seat of pleasure, until 1791, when the British under Lord Cornwallis laid siege to its walls, and one bright moonlit night took it by storm.

Ever since that night Bangalore has been a British military station, famed for its mild temperature. It consists of the busy, noisy, dirty native town—70,000 souls packed in an area less than three square miles—and of the vast, thinly-populated cantonments with their ambitious public buildings—Greek temples surrounded by verandas—and other architectural masterpieces due to British sense of harmony. It also includes a strange imitation of an English village with a real English village church, spire and all, presiding over a real English parish of unmistakable English Tommies and their families.

And not many miles off stretch virgin forests inhabited by herds of wild elephants and tribes as primitive as those of Central Africa. They dwell apart, these shy, coffee-coloured, coarse-visaged dwarfs, each family in a hut rudely constructed of branches, a cluster of such huts forming a little community which lives free from culture and caste under the canopy of the immemorial trees and the mild rule of its patriarch. Thus they live with the

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wild beasts, whose habits they know and on whose flesh—when herbs and honey fail—they feed, inspiring in their less unsophisticated neighbours that mysterious awe which belongs to the dimly understood. All that is strange is sinister.

The aloofness of the children of the forest and their indifference to the principle of caste, or any other, are interpreted as clear proofs of uncanniness; and these poor creatures are propitiated as masters of the Black Art and dreaded as intimate comrades of the Evil One. To this reputation these interesting reminders of the dark past of the human race probably owe their survival in a land boasting a British Resident, a representative Assembly, a Press, and a responsible Cabinet of one.

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CHAPTER XXII

THE ELEPHANT-HUNT*

WE are seated behind a barrier, improvised by the hand of man, but interlaced with leafy boughs so as not to arouse the elephants' suspicions. Below us shimmers a wide reach of the tranquil Kubari, and beyond stretches the illimitable forest, gray in the Indian twilight. Far away the smoke of the burning jungle hangs over the low range of hills along the horizon. The elephants are hidden in the dense bamboo clumps, enjoying a brief rest from the harrying drivers who for weeks past have been slowly gathering in the herd by easy stages, through mile after mile of forest, towards this stockade. The only sound heard above our whispering is the rustling of the dry bamboo stems overhead.

All of a sudden the forest is filled with the clamour of men, the 'clop, clop' of rattles, and the wild explosions of old-fashioned guns. Beaters and shikaris are uproariously active, and the further side of the jungle is on fire. The elephants, a herd of forty of all ages and sizes, finding themselves between the enemy and the burning undergrowth, break out along the river, and plunge helter-skelter into the water. At the same moment the opposite bank bursts into points of flame, and the leader of the herd, panic-stricken, turns back to the only road left open—the road that leads to the stockade and captivity.

* For the following chapter I am indebted to the kindness of my friend Mr. H. Holman, one of the few Europeans, besides their Royal Highnesses' staff, who were privileged to witness this elephant-hunt in Mysore.—G. F. A.

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The herd follows its leader, the heavy iron portcullis falls into place, and the first act of the drama is over.

We return to camp through the jungle, along a road lined with beaters, shikaris, and camp-servants haggling at the sweet-stalls by the wayside. The camp-fires are lighted, and to-night there will be rest; but with the dawn the turmoil begins again.

It is a pleasant four miles' walk in the cool gray haze of early morning. The trees of the forest loom on either side of the road, the giant bamboos sweep the sky with their brown tresses, and here and there a younger group, still green, fringes or droops over a still wayside pool. The beaters are gathered round the wood fires over which their food is cooked, but a contingent of four or five tame elephants, with their mahouts across their necks, are already preparing for the business of the day.

As we draw near the stockade, we see the iron portcullis lifted cautiously to permit the egress of a couple of tame elephants towing an unwilling captive, who struggles gallantly at the end of a stout rope. The gate appears too narrow, and there may be trouble. But the wily veteran who brings up the rear gives the prisoner a brisk heave with his blunted, brass-bound tusks, and all is well. More captives are dragged out of the stockade in a similar manner, and thus the herd is somewhat thinned, for their number exceeds the capacity of the inner stockade into which the prisoners are to be driven later.

Meanwhile, as the second act has not yet begun, we walk on to a spot in the jungle where another herd of about fifty stand unwittingly enclosed within a large fence, with a ditch on the inner side, twelve feet wide and ten deep, spanned at intervals by a rickety bridge of three or four bamboos, thrown loosely across to provide a path of escape, should, as frequently happens, a straggling beater be marked out for attack by one of the bolder spirits of the herd. On the outside of the fence are stationed watchers, each armed with a smouldering brand, ready to turn back any charge of the captives, who can be heard

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wandering up and down through the jungle, scenting danger and seeking a way out of their mysterious prison. Backwards and forwards they move uneasily, their increasing agitation indicated by the crash of the dry wood trampled under foot. But though not more than twenty yards away, it is barely possible to distinguish the masses of gray-black life through the deep shade of the bamboo clumps and the tangled undergrowth. So we return to the stockade, where the final act of the drama is about to begin.

A daïs has been erected near the funnel-shaped avenue which terminates in the entrance to the scene of the forthcoming performance — a small circular enclosure within the larger stockade—and the spectators, including the Prince and Princess of Wales, the Maharaja and his guests, take their seats on that daïs, screened, clumsily enough, by newly-cut green boughs. In like fashion are disguised the rails converging to the entrance of the inner enclosure, and it argues little penetration on the part of the elephants if they are blinded to the real nature of the avenue which lies open before them; but, hush! the curtain is up.

The audience crouch warily behind the screen, watching in breathless silence the last efforts of the bewildered herd. Most of the beasts are huddled together in a struggling mass at the entrance to the funnel, fearing to go on, and yet not daring to face the crowd of beaters who, at a prudent distance, urge them forward, shouting and clattering their rattles. The elephants at the back bury their heads in the scrum, burrowing frantically. Every now and again the scrum screws round, and the beaters fall back, shrieking, and seeking shelter behind the tame elephants, who, drawn up on the fringe of the field, look on the game with an air of keen, yet perfectly calm, appreciation.

Suddenly a lady elephant breaks from the herd, and charges wildly across the open. A beater in a blue shirt is in her way, and she singles him out for her vengeance.

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He dodges hither and thither, breaking at right angles from one bamboo bush to another, each time narrowly escaping his pursuer, until a charge of shot, fired at point-blank range straight into the elephant's face, brings her to a standstill. She draws back, trumpeting with rage, but her surprise lasts only an instant. Again and again she charges, trying to get at the blue shirt, but every time she is forced to retreat before the shouting mob and the burning undergrowth. The crowd of men and elephants regard her with profound admiration, while she lumbers furiously to and fro, looking for her enemy. Suddenly the blue shirt creeps out from its hiding-place, and our virago makes a new charge upon it, heedless of the shouts and shots of the shikaris. The blue shirt crawls into the thick of a bamboo clump, and finds a refuge among its thorns. The elephant cannot dare the spiky covert with her trunk, but she works her way in with her forefeet. Now she seems to have reached her victim, and throws herself on her knees, determined to crush him. The blue shirt's last hour is close at hand.

By this time the shikaris have come within range, and they open a merciless fusillade on her. She is driven off, and the victim is pulled out, seemingly crushed to death. But we learn later that, though sorely torn and bruised, he has received no serious injury. The stiff bamboo spikes proved too much for the tender skin of the elephant's trunk and face, and she had only succeeded in partly kneeling on him and crushing him further into the heart of the thicket.

Meanwhile, all the wild elephants, male and female, young, old, and middle-aged alike, have been driven into the inner stockade, and the spectators, climbing up to a gallery built round the circular walls, find themselves looking down from a height of some ten feet upon the herd, crowded together, all heads turned away from the entrance. The young ones are invisible between the legs of their parents, but nearly all the trumpeting and squealing comes from them, the grown-ups taking matters in a more digni-

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fied fashion, though they have not yet, perhaps, abandoned all hope of escape. Every now and then one of the huge beasts walks deliberately up to the stockade, and, putting its head against one of the posts, gives a heave that makes the structure creak and tremble; but it is too well fixed and braced to yield to an isolated attack. Were the whole herd to push together, it might be unpleasant; but the elephant, despite his many intellectual gifts, does not understand the value of co-operation. He is a beast of genius, and it is the essence of genius to be independent. He suffers from a morbid horror of sinking his individuality in a common cause, and he has to pay the penalty of individual greatness by collective humiliation. Nevertheless, when a wicked-looking old mass of flesh and genius puts forth all its weight and strength against the post immediately beneath one's seat, one is apt to experience a curious kind of emotion.

But behold! there march into the ring five or six tame elephants, trained, like the soldiers of a conquered land which is divided against itself, to help in the subjugation of their brethren. They march solemnly in, each, in addition to his mahout, carrying on his back a man armed with a sharp-pointed spear and a coil of stout cable, one end of which is securely twisted round his girth. The newcomers are backed into the crowding herd, until three or four of the constituent members thereof are pushed out from the rest, and each is squeezed, tails to heads, between two of the tame ones. While thus prevented from turning round, some men on foot, who have crawled in under the stockade, pass the rope round one or both of the hind-legs of the captive, and anchor him to the stump of a tree left standing for the purpose.

The first to be fettered is a fine tusker, the acknowledged leader of the herd. He did not seem inclined to offer much resistance at first; but when he found himself fixed by the heels he fought long and hard, though only succeeding in twisting the rope tighter into his flesh.

To make room for the severer work, the mahouts now

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begin to thin out the herd by tying up some of the youngsters. This is done by dropping a noosed rope over the head and neck, and then lashing the noose. When safely tied, the young captives are tugged away, screaming and trumpeting loudly. The struggle is watched with great interest by a big tame tusker, who follows up each baby elephant as it is captured, straightening out the tangle formed when the youngster makes a dash among the legs of the older ones. Now and again the old gentleman will halt over some obstreperous youngster guilty of more noise than is deemed decent, and, at a word from the mahout, he lifts the struggling baby on his tusks, throws it up four or five feet into the air, and lets it drop on the ground with a thud. This treatment generally shakes the spirit out of the astonished offender, though one or two of them do not give in until the performance has been repeated.

When a sufficient number of babies have been roped and tied up to the side of the stockade, the bigger elephants receive undivided attention. Among these the heroine of the blue shirt again distinguishes herself by the obstinacy and ferocity of her resistance. But she is eventually captured and fastened to the biggest pair of tame elephants; yet, though they are assisted by the great tusker, who follows her up and gives her an occasional lift with his powerful tusks, she continues her heroic fight for liberty, at times pulling her captors backward, in spite of all the urging of the mahouts, and cleverly utilizing a solitary tree here and there for the purpose of entangling the ropes by which she is led. The odds are too many against the gallant lady; but, though the struggle lasted nearly the whole day, when we went away she was still unsubdued.

In the end all the elephants are secured, and led away to be fastened by all four legs outside the stockade. There only remains the fine tusker, who, first to succumb, has been fretting himself with vain strivings to break his fetters asunder. Though tied by the heels, he is not to be treated with contumely, his long trunk and keen tusks commanding respect, and the spearmen, now on foot, keep

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at a discreet distance, holding in their hands the ropes with which he is to be harnessed and led out of the stockade. Here the wily old gentleman who has so tactfully silenced the noisy youngsters and the lady elephant has another part to play. Standing head to head with the recalcitrant one, he begins to stroke the face of the latter with his trunk until he has drawn close enough to get his brass-bound tusks on either side of the other's trunk. This done, he holds him firmly until the strong cable has been fastened in double strands round his girth, and his forefeet have been noosed by the men. The latter, taking the loose ends with a double turn round the stout tree-stumps, pull on them till the captive's legs are drawn out full stretch. Then a jostle from another elephant sends the prisoner rolling over on one side, and he is dragged into slavery with the rest of his brethren. On our way back to camp, we see the captives tied up in the jungle along the road, casting looks full of reproach on those of their kind who have so basely betrayed them. Here they will remain until a little judicious starvation has taught them the futility of individual resistance to the force of combination. Then their education becomes only a matter of time, and they are, in due course, ready for the market, to share in the toils of wood-piling, or in the glories of tiger-hunting, or, alas! in the unspeakable splendour of a triumphal procession.

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CHAPTER XXIII

HYDERABAD

We are in the State of the Nizam, greatest of Indian feudatories, whose dominions spread nearly over the whole of the Deccan, or central plateau of Southern India, covering more than 80,000 square miles, rich in rivers and luscious vegetation. A large proportion of this vast territory is dense with jungle, such as the tract round Nekonda, 120 miles distant from the capital, where a shooting camp was prepared for the Prince of Wales.

The road from the railway-station to the camp, twelve miles off, cuts through a wilderness of trees, knotted and gnarled, some still clothed in thick foliage and festooned with riotous creepers, against whose dark greenness flashes the 'flame of the forest,' now ablaze with brilliant blossoms. But most of the trunks, even so early in the season, stand gaunt and gray, spreading their skeleton boughs abroad, stripped bare by the heat; and the earth beneath is carpeted with curling yellow leaves, while through the trellis of the twigs overhead glows the blue sky fiercely. It is a forest combining the cold appearance of wintry nudity with the sultry drowsiness of midsummer.

There is none of the humming of life which one fondly associates in imagination with a tropical jungle; but over all broods an uncanny silence, deepened by the sad cooing of the wild dove or by the rustle and crackle of the crisp leaves, as a gust of warm breeze sweeps lightly over the ground.

Yet the jungle is by no means devoid of life. Here is

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a flock of monkeys, great and small, short-tailed and long-tailed, scampering up the trunks and leaping noiselessly from bough to bough, alarmed at the sight of their remote descendant. Now, emboldened by distance, they squat on the branches, blinking and grimacing down at you or up at the sun impartially. They form a most edifying caricature of the conceited animal which calls itself the paragon of creation.

Suddenly, a few yards in front of you, across your very path, gallops a strange quadruped of the size of a horse, with a glossy blue-gray coat, short tail, and short furred horns. It is the horse-deer called *nilgai*.

Besides, there are leopards, panthers, bears, and tigers in great abundance, and no one is allowed to travel this way after dark. A short time ago, the Chief of Police has informed me, one of his sowars, belated on the road, was snatched off his saddle by a tiger. But at mid-day all these fellow-creatures seem to prefer the shade of their lairs, and the knowledge of their proximity only lends a spice of interest to the scenery.

Here and there from amidst the trees rises a quaint, isolated hill of huge boulders, black and bleak, and poised upon one another like the ruins of a Cyclopean castle devastated by fire. Or, again, the hill swells into the form of a beast, its back bristling with wild wood delicately outlined against the azure of the sky. Here and there, again, the trees fall back, leaving a clear space bright with the green blades of waving paddy. Over this field towers a clump of stately palms, immensely tall and slender, and close by crouches a colony of low huts built entirely of dry palm-leaves.

Beyond the jungle rolls the open plain, bordered with blue mountains in the distance, but for the rest gently undulating, and, though in sore need of water this year, full of promise. The soil, when manured, yields a sequence of all kinds of crops without regard to season, for here it is always summer; and from year's end to year's end caravans of camels, elephants, bullock-carts, and horses

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may be seen moving backward and forward over the land, laden with the fruits thereof.

It is a land blessed with every blessing that Allah can bestow, except one. In suggestive contrast to Rajputana, with its arid plains and hardy people, the Deccan is a nursery of other flowers than men. Here, as in Bengal, the trite reflection forces itself upon the spectator's lips—

> 'La terra molle e lieta e dilettosa
> Simili a sè gli abitator produce':

indolent, improvident, comprehensively incompetent.

Eight sleepy coolies barely contrived to carry my six light packages from the railway-carriage to a ragged vehicle drawn by two animals which a brother-sufferer faithfully described as hair trunks slightly animated. Like their drivers, the horses of the Deccan appear to possess just enough energy to irritate. Were it otherwise, would these ten millions of human beings bend the knee to a handful of exotic sahibs? And would their ruler be content to rule by other than the grace of Allah?

But here are my slightly animated hair trunks waiting to convey me to the capital. It is the one city in an area of 80,000 square miles; the rest are hamlets, many belonging to the great nobles, who possess over their villeins virtually all the powers of medieval barons, and, like the Turkish beys, derive from their enormous estates the means of idling in the capital. This is set in a ring of low rocks of granite, jagged and stern, here and there sloping smoothly down to the shores of blue ponds which smile placidly back to the placid blue heavens above. Across this valley flows the river Musa, dividing the suburb in which live the Europeans from the walled city.

I pause on the bridge and look into the stream below—its waters split into broad arrow-heads of white foam by the outstanding boulders; its bosom dotted with floating ducks; its banks busy with men, women, and children, bullocks, buffaloes, and elephants. The men and women are washing their clothes or their bodies, the children are

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playing in the sun, the bullocks are drinking; but the buffaloes only wallow in the shallows, while the elephants plash heavily into the mud, and then climb on to dry land refreshed.

They are full of a curious kind of humour, these ponderous quadrupeds; but I will not insult the reader with the oft-told tales of elephantine vivacity. And yet I cannot resist the temptation of repeating one story which the Old Resident has just related to me, vouching for its authenticity. It may be called the Story of the Humane Elephant:

'A few weeks ago one of the Nizam's elephants, while crossing the jungle, happened to tread unawares upon a bird wandering outside her nest. Startled by the contact with the soft body, the elephant gave a ridiculous little squeal, such as elephants give when startled. Then, looking down, he perceived what he had done: the dead bird, and close by her young ones, gaping helplessly. Whereupon the elephant, smitten with remorse, addressed the orphans as follows: "Poor little things, left motherless through my own stupidity! I will be a mother unto you, and will tend you as your mother would have done." Having spoken thus, he sat down upon them.'

I was pleased to find so much sense and sensibility under so thick a skin, and to have at last met with a true story concerning an animal so often made the subject of improbable fiction.

Thus conversing, we crossed the bridge, passed through one of the thirteen gates which pierce the walls, and found ourselves in the main thoroughfare of an Oriental city but little affected as yet by Occidental fashion.

The street is flanked with small shops—silversmiths, coppersmiths; shops stuffed with gold-broidered slippers, and shops resplendent with melons, water-melons, limes, oranges, and bananas. The toddy-sellers sit cross-legged on low, carved armchairs, with the round pitchers of the frothy liquor in front of them; in the other establishments turbaned traders sit cross-legged on the floor amid their

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wares, or lie on their backs, one leg upon the other, puffing at their hookas.

Up above, the purdah which screens the small windows is occasionally lifted by a jewelled hand, and a lady's eyes may be seen peering out upon the world. Down below, women of a rank which renders seclusion impossible and unnecessary bend under heavy sacks of corn or rice, and the water-carriers empty their skins upon the dust.

The road is crowded with a variety of male bipeds, local and otherwise: men of the Punjab, men of Rajputana, Mahrattas, Madrassis, Sikhs, Parsis, natives of Central Asia—Afghanistan, Turkestan, Persia, and Arabia—and negroes of African descent.

Most of the natives are Hindus, but all the strangers are followers of the Prophet of Mecca, attracted to this great stronghold of Islam by the prospect of employment in the Mahomedan Prince's service. For there is no part of India where the faith of the Prophet flourishes more rigorously than in Hyderabad. Here I see a great mosque with balconied minarets and arched cloisters, a copy of the very sanctuary at Mecca, built by Kutab Shah Mahomed Kuli, the founder of the city, 300 years ago. At every corner I see shrines enclosing the tombs of holy Sheikhs, whom the Hindus also, ever hospitable to new gods, adore, and at every turn I am confronted with the red fez and the star and crescent of Turkey. Over one shop I even discern the imperial cipher of the Osmanli, and the Old Resident explains that His Highness the Nizam loves to take for his model the Sultan of Stamboul, to whom alone he is second as a ruler of true believers. He cherishes about 300 wives, and refuses to allow his countenance to shine upon his subjects oftener than he can help. This surprises me, for I saw His Highness this morning, and what impressed me about his features, dress, and demeanour was their utter unlikeness to those of Abdul Hamid.

The Nizam is a gentleman of forty years of age, with a high-bred face adorned with a moustache and a pair of

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whiskers which, when taken in conjunction with his black frock-coat and manner, make you forget his turban and think of an Austrian banker. And yet this European-looking Prince has 300 wives and some 80 children; and the revenues of a whole suburb—the Begum Bazaar—are devoted as pin-money to his wife-in-chief.

Moreover, His Highness does not permit the printing of newspapers in his State, the journals from which the inhabitants of Hyderabad learn what happens around them being published in Madras. Another point of similarity between the Nizam and his august prototype is the extreme suspiciousness shown to strangers by his police. At every station the newcomer is requested to enter in a book his name, nationality, occupation, and date of arrival and departure. But perhaps this inquisitiveness is due to the provisions of the Plague Regulations. As to the ruler's inaccessibility, the Old Resident has a very interesting story to tell.

'Two years ago,' he says, 'there was in one of our districts a great flood, followed by a great plague of locusts. The flood ruined many fields, the locusts did the rest, and the villagers were left starving. The Government remitted their taxes for the moment, and the wretched people managed to sow another crop under great difficulties, for now the land, delivered from the deluge, suffered from drought. They were on the point of reaping this scanty crop when the tax-gatherers came with arms and claimed, not only the tax on this crop, but also the taxes already remitted. The villagers implored for mercy, but there was no mercy for them. So they surrendered their crops, and some of them even sold their cattle in order to satisfy the collectors' greed. Then came the hot weather; the eggs which the locusts had deposited in the ground were hatched by the heat, and a second plague ensued, which devoured the tender rice-blades as they sprouted from the soil. Next came the tax-gatherers again, and the people, in despair, arose and walked fifty miles to the capital in order to lay their case before the Nizam himself.

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'Here they came, some 3,000 men, and sat in the streets outside the palace, waiting for His Highness to come forth and hear their tale of distress. They waited for a whole week, but His Highness came not forth. Instead, on the eighth day, there drove out the Chief of Police in his carriage. Whereupon all the men, with one accord, fell flat on their faces before the carriage, and cried out: "Drive over us! drive over us!" The Chief of Police forbore to do so, but, alighting from his carriage, said: "What is it you want from me?" Then five or six headmen arose and spoke on behalf of their brethren, who remained prostrate. The Chief, having listened, promised to report their complaint to his master, and drove back into the palace to do so. The Nizam then sent out word to the crowd that he would inquire into the matter and do the needful. The peasants went away to their homes hoping. But His Highness never inquired into the matter, and the tax-gatherers continued to torture them.'

'Torture!' said I; 'what do you mean?'

'One of the methods is to seize the peasant and make him stand out in the sun with an enormous stone on his back until he pays his taxes.'

I could only express the hope that this method was not very frequently resorted to, but the Old Resident shook his head, smiling darkly.

His dramatic tale invested the palace with new interest in my eyes, and as I gazed round at the great walls and the courtyards swarming with a mob of armed retainers, servants in gaudy robes, and richly-caparisoned horses, I saw in imagination these 3,000 figures prostrate in the street, waiting for eight days to pour their distress into their Prince's ears.

And yet time was, not long ago, when matters were infinitely worse, when every noble's hand was against every other, and Hyderabad, torn by rival ambitions, which the British Residents were apparently unable to reconcile, came to be described as a happy hunting-ground

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for all adventurers from East and West. The Nizam counted for nothing, and his irresponsible courtiers for everything. Intrigue and incompetence ruled unchecked, and their triumphs were revealed by frequent scandals of corruption and crime, until some five years ago there came Colonel Barr, and under his sympathetic direction the Nizam was persuaded to resume some of the responsibilities of royalty. The British Resident and the Prince between them drew up a programme of reform, and the fruits of their industry are visible at this hour in the comparative order which has been evolved out of the old administrative chaos. To the picturesque vagaries of self-seeking and unscrupulous scribes have succeeded measures of prosaic utility. The finances of the State flourish, famine has grown rarer, communication has been facilitated, justice has ceased to be a mere figure of speech or a source of bakshish, the police protects at last to some extent the people whom it once only fleeced, and while I pen these lines my ears ring with the roar of an Industrial Exhibition!

Yet, even under the most prosaically efficient administration, Hyderabad has not yet entirely lost those romantic irregularities which make the East worthy of the cynic's attention. It still is, in many respects, what Turkey was 200 years ago. I can see that even as I stroll idly through the bazaar, with its buzzing flies and whining beggars, through the dust and the sun, jostled by all kinds of men, many of whom swagger past, their belts bristling with daggers, and carrying in one hand a curved sword as a Londoner carries his umbrella.

Thanks to these gentlemen, the narrow lanes and courts which open out of the main street are unfit for exploration by the unprotected, and that notwithstanding the legions of constables, who, unaccustomed to the luxury which the Prince of Wales's presence has forced upon them, slip their new, buckled shoes off their feet and squat by the roadside. Then they take their striped turbans off, and proceed to scratch their heads with one hand and

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their toes with the other, enjoying the perfect inaction which the Oriental loves.

Here and there, as I move on, I see walls painted with many crude designs—angels poised on unhinged wings, gods and goddesses, and, most frequent of all, black-striped tigers of a species that, I am sure, never trod the jungle. Most of these works of art—it must be art, for it is not nature—are committed on a background of yellow, as brilliant as the yellow of the lemon and more brilliant than that of jaundice. It is the Nizam's colour.

Thus I traverse the city, and, emerging through a second gate, I find myself in another suburb of low mud dwellings, and beyond rise the gray rocks on which stands the white Falaknuma Palace, a great modern building, with Greek pillars and pediments, intended for the accommodation of distinguished visitors. It now accommodates the Prince and Princess of Wales.

His Highness the Nizam, in spite of the death of his favourite daughter, which occurred the other day, has accorded his guests a truly royal reception, and has assured them that their visit 'is one more link, and a very strong link, in the long chain of most cordial associations which binds me and my house to the British Empire.' Let me attempt to trace that chain link by link.

The ruler's full title, Nizam-ul-mulk—that is, 'Organizer of the Kingdom'—is derived from his ancestor Asaf Jah, a Turkoman courtier of Delhi, who was, in the early days of the eighteenth century, appointed by the Moghul Emperor Viceroy of the Deccan under the above title, and, availing himself of the opportunities which the times afforded, converted his viceroyalty into sovereignty, and founded a hereditary dynasty. On his death, in 1748, there ensued a fierce internecine war for the succession between his son and grandson. One of the pretenders, of course, found a supporter in the East India Company; the claim of the other was, equally of course, espoused by the French. The latter, however, disappeared from the field, and for a brief while the British client proved

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On the Bridge at Hyderabad.

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victorious. But, soon after, he perished by the hands of his own followers, and the French client was left in full possession of a sceptre which he wielded by the grace, and under the guidance, of the French General Dupleix.

Not long afterwards, this prince also perished in an obscure affray with some of his own followers—disappointed Pathan chieftains—and the French raised to power a creature of their own—an event which gave rise to a second dispute for the succession, brought to a speedy end by the curiously opportune death of one of the two claimants.

British and French went on plotting and counter-plotting for supremacy over this distracted principality, until Clive's victories forced the French to devote their whole attention to the defence of their own possessions. The weak prince of the Deccan, thus left in the lurch, sought to prop up his tottering throne by a discreet submission to British dictation, but in the end he was dethroned and murdered by his own brother—a villain who, however, could at least make his villainy respected. Accordingly, in 1766, the British, in return for a grant of a maritime district, not only recognised the usurper as a lawful sovereign, but agreed to furnish him with a subsidiary force when required, and, when not required, to pay him instead an annual tribute of nine lakhs of rupees.

Not very long after the conclusion of this treaty the British readily offered to the Nizam their aid in his contemplated campaign against Haidar Ali of Mysore, whose star was then in the ascendant; but the Nizam suddenly changed his mind, and, in a lucid moment, made of his intended enemy an ally against his dangerous friends. In this struggle the two princes were worsted, and a new treaty was signed with the Nizam in 1768, on similar terms to those of the old. This alliance passed through many vicissitudes during the next generation, for in those last days of the eighteenth century Hyderabad played a leading part in the warfare waged by the Marquis of Wellesley against Tippu Sultan of Mysore and his French allies, and both

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sides were anxious to secure the Nizam's friendship. The British finally succeeded, and the Nizam, on the whole, came out of the transaction the richer in lands and the poorer in power. Henceforth the British, instead of paying, exacted tribute in men or money—a reversal of terms foreshadowed by the treaty of 1800. For this success the East India Company was largely indebted to a hero appropriately named Achilles Kirkpatrick, British Resident at Hyderabad, who won the Nizam's affection and seasoned political intrigue with domestic romance, the times being propitious for the combination.

There lived in the court of Hyderabad a nobleman of Persian descent called Akil-ud-daula, or 'the Genius of Government,' who was paymaster of the Nizam's forces and had a beautiful granddaughter named Khair-un-nisa, or 'Excellent among Women.' This young lady heard of Achilles' manly beauty and manifold fascination, and, upon seeing him through the purdah during an entertainment at her grandfather's, determined to fall in love with him. Having done so, she proceeded to woo the hero in the natural, direct, and impetuous manner which differentiates the woman of the East from her artificial sisters of the West. She sent to Mr. Kirkpatrick her old nurse with a message that she loved him, and wished to become his wife. He declined. She persisted. He continued inflexible, until the poor Begum, despairing of vicarious diplomacy, had recourse to a personal trial of strength. She called on Mr. Kirkpatrick one evening, and Mr. Kirkpatrick saw and succumbed.

'It was at this interview,' says the gallant Achilles, 'that I had a full and close survey of her lovely person. It lasted during the greater part of the night, and was evidently contrived by the grandmother and mother, whose very existence hung on hers, to indulge her uncontrollable wishes.'

Thus Mr. Kirkpatrick was fated, by a single act of kindness, to save the lives of no fewer than three generations of passionate Hyderabad ladies.

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After this interview there was, of course, only one road open to Achilles, and he bravely took it. Pending the ceremony, the impatient bride took up her abode in the Residency. The adventure made the unromantic Marquis furious, and nearly lost Achilles his position. But the marriage was celebrated none the less brilliantly in 1801, and announced to Lord Wellesley by His Highness the Nizam himself, who loved the fascinating Achilles as his own son. The Governor-General, seeing that one alliance depended on another, granted his graceless acceptance of the inevitable, and Achilles and his Begum lived happy ever after. Of this union was born Carlyle's famous 'Kitty'—'a strangely-complexioned young lady, with soft brown eyes, amiable, graceful, low-voiced, languidly harmonious, a half-Begum; in short, an interesting specimen of the semi-Oriental Englishwoman.'

This romance of the Princess Khair-un-nisa and Mr. Achilles Kirkpatrick, otherwise known as Hashmad Jung, or 'the Magnificent in Battle,' is still cherished by the people of Hyderabad as a memorial from an age when a middle-class British sahib did not consider a union with a noble lady of the land as derogatory to his own dignity or as a stigma on his posterity. Englishmen in those days did not preach imperialism, but practised it. They were no more conscious of their racial superiority than a healthy man is of his stomach. It was a barbarous age.

The history of the relations between the State of Hyderabad and the British Raj during the nineteenth century contains little that is romantic, though much that is regrettable. In 1853 the Nizam's dominions barely escaped annexation, thanks largely to the efforts of the able Minister, Salar Jung, who acted as Regent on behalf of the minor prince, and at the present hour one finds the Spokesman of Native Discontent observing: 'What the ultimate result of the indefinite extension of the policy of protection will be it is impossible to foretell, but it will soon be difficult to discriminate between annexation and

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the process of friendly absorption which has displaced the older policy.'

These dismal forebodings do not prevent thoughtful Indians from appreciating, frankly and gratefully, the good that accrues to Native States from British intervention, when this is prompted by sincere and benevolent statesmanship. A single grain of kindness yields a whole crop of gratitude in India. When Sir David Barr retired from the Residency last February, he was sped by the whole-hearted gratitude and admiration of all sections of the Nizam's subjects.

This Resident seems to have realized in his own conduct the ideal of a perfect adviser. The result was a great success. When the great Minister, Salar Jung, after a rule of thirty years, died in 1882, his son succeeded to his father's position, though not to his talents. Proud, domineering, and tactless, Salar II. soon lost the confidence of his young master and made room for another nobleman, who remained in office for eight years, continuing the battle for the realities of power which his predecessor had lost. Friction and chaos ensued, as already described, and this state of things lasted until the arrival of Colonel Barr, whose skill improved the administration without alienating the confidence of the people.

But even this excellent Resident would probably have accomplished little were not his efforts seconded by many honest and capable officials from among the Nizam's noblemen. Thus, if the Native States owe much to the experience, zeal, and ability of British advisers, these gentlemen would labour in vain but for the corresponding qualities among the native rulers' subjects. In other words, the only condition of success—the condition on the observance of which depends the very permanence of the British Empire in India—is sincere co-operation between the Englishman and the native, and as the native becomes more and more educated he is entitled to a greater and yet greater share in the government of his

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own country. The example of a Native State like Baroda brilliantly proves that the talent for self-government is not a monopoly of the West. The moral qualities and the material means necessary for the work are quite as plentiful in the East. All that is needed is a stimulus from outside to quicken the dormant body into action, and some disinterested teaching to guide its first steps.

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CHAPTER XXIV

BENARES

EVERY great city in the world is known by some special feature, product, or property which differentiates it from other cities, and gives to it its peculiar tone and its individuality. Thus, London is famed abroad for its fogs and its Lord Mayor, Paris for its boulevards and its frocks, Naples for its Vesuvius and its macaroni, Athens for its Parthenon and its politicians, Constantinople for its Turkish delight and Armenian massacres. The characteristic industry of Benares is holiness.

From the earliest times of which record exists this hoary spot has been revered as the sanctuary of Hinduism. Then, in the year 2513 of the present Kali-Yuga, or, Christianly speaking, in 523 B.C., there arose a new prophet, who chose Benares for the starting-point of that missionary journey the fruits whereof abide to this day. This was Siddhartha Gautama, the fourth and last of the Buddhas, born under the constellation Visa on a Tuesday in May, in the year 2478 of the Kali-Yuga. The moon shone full at the time of his birth, as she also did on all the cardinal eras of his life: his renunciation of the world, his attainment of enlightenment, his entry into eternal rest. Wherefore all these epochs are jointly celebrated by good Buddhists in the great festival of the full moon in the month of Vaisakha, which corresponds with our month of May.

He was the son of King Suddhodama and Queen Maya, who reigned over the realm of Kapilavastu, one hundred miles north-east of Benares, and about forty miles from the Himalayas.

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Now, it has been well said that it is easier for an elephant to dance on the point of a needle than for a prince to acquire wisdom. But our prince was gifted with such a natural aptitude for knowledge that even in his cradle he seemed to understand all arts and sciences almost without study. As he grew into boyhood he had the best teachers, but they could teach him little that he did not know already. He was not an ordinary prince. The Brahman astrologers had foretold at his birth that, oppressed by the sufferings of mankind, he would one day abdicate his throne and, renouncing power, riches, children, wife, and all other carnal worries, become a prophet.

The king, his father, not wishing to lose his heir, carefully endeavoured to prevent his seeing aught that might suggest to him human misery and death. He built for him three magnificent palaces suitable to the three Indian seasons—the hot, the cold, and the febriculous—of nine, five, and three stories respectively. Around each palace bloomed gardens of the most beautiful and fragrant flowers, with fountains of spouting waters, trees full of singing birds, and peacocks strutting with outspread tails over the ground. Furthermore, the prince, in his sixteenth year, was married to a lovely princess, whom he won, after the ancient warrior fashion, by overcoming all his rivals in feats of skill and valour. With that princess he lived virtuously in his palaces, and many beautiful maidens, skilled in dancing and music, were in perpetual attendance to amuse him. It is, therefore, small wonder that the young prince was terribly bored.

It was the monotony of his own prosperity that made the young prince melancholy, for as yet he had had no opportunity of witnessing the misery of other men. No one was even allowed to speak of death and distress in his presence, so careful was the king to prevent the fulfilment of the astrologers' prediction. But the gods conspired to defeat the king's purpose.

The prince was in his twenty-ninth year when a *deva* appeared to him under four forms, repulsive yet impressive

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—viz., as an old man broken down with age, as a sick man, as a decaying corpse, and as an emaciated hermit. The prince was so tender-hearted that, at sight of those unpleasant things, he determined to leave all his luxuries and to go alone into the jungle, in order that, by deep and undistracted meditation, he might discover the cause of human suffering and its cure.

It was love, unbounded and unreasonable, that prompted the prince to take this vow. Through numberless incarnations and æons beyond count, he had been cultivating that weakness, with the unfaltering resolve to become a Buddha, that is, 'Enlightened' or 'All-wise.' Such a person is born into the world at various periods, when mankind have become overwhelmed with misery through ignorance, and need the wisdom which it is the function of a Buddha to impart, and the guidance which it is his privilege to give.

With this curious object in view, our prince one night, when all were asleep, arose, cast a last look at his sleeping wife and infant son, called his attendant Channa, mounted his favourite white steed Kanthaka, and rode to the palace gate. The *devas* had thrown a heavy slumber upon the gate-keepers, so that they might not hear the noise of the horse's hoofs. They also caused the gate to open, and so the prince rode out into the darkness.

Thus alone, with his faithful attendant and his fixed idea, the prince journeyed through the night. When he reached the river Anoma, a long way from his father's kingdom, he alighted from his horse, cut off his beautiful hair with his sword, donned the yellow robe of an ascetic, and, handing his ornaments and horse to Channa, ordered him to take them back to his father, while he himself proceeded on foot into a neighbouring forest, where dwelt some wise hermits, and became their disciple.

These hermits taught that by severe penances and pitiless torture of the body man may acquire perfect wisdom. But the prince did not find this so. He mastered their systems and practised all their penances,

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but he could not thus discover the cause of human sorrow or its cure. Therefore, he left these hermits, and, accompanied by five Brahmans, went away into the forest of Gaya, where he spent six years in deep meditation beneath the Bodhi tree, undergoing the severest discipline and self-mortification.

During six years Siddhartha sat under the Bodhi tree pondering with his whole mind the higher problems of life, and taking less and less food, until he ate scarcely more than one grain of rice or sesame a day. But even this discipline failed to teach him the wisdom which he sought. He grew thinner and thinner in body and fainter in spirit, until one day, as he slowly walked about meditating, he dropped to the ground like one dead. On reviving, he reflected that knowledge could not be attained by starvation. So he decided to eat.

Having formed this resolution, he arose, took his alms-bowl, bathed in the river, ate food, and, in the evening, went to the Bodhi tree and sat under it, determined not to rise again until it yielded unto him the fruit of knowledge. There he sat, facing east, and lo! in the course of the night he obtained the knowledge of his previous births, of the causes of reincarnation, and of the way to extinguish desire. Just as day was breaking this light dawned upon him, and his mind was opened like the full-blown lotus-flower. The Four Truths were his. He had become Buddha—the Enlightened, the All-wise.

He discovered that sorrow is the offspring of rebirth, rebirth the offspring of desire to live, and desire to live the offspring of ignorance. Therefore, to escape sorrow it is necessary to escape rebirth; to escape rebirth it is necessary to extinguish the desire for it; and to extinguish desire it is necessary to dispel ignorance. Thus man, purged of passion, attains that highest state of peace which is called Nirvana, and becomes part of the Divine. This end is within the reach of everyone, for everyone possesses latent within him the capacity for enlightenment. In order to attain it, however, man

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must master the fundamental truth that existence means sorrow.

This gospel, so gray and chilly, filled Buddha with a strange fervour. He no longer saw his fellow-creatures as blind men at large, groping their way blindly to final darkness; but as children of light led towards an eternity remote but glorious.

Yet even Buddha, his exaltation over, recalled with misgiving the limitations of these heirs of eternal bliss. In the fifth week after his attainment of Buddhaship the Blessed One sat again at the foot of the Bodhi tree and thought:

'I have attained the truth which is profound, hard to perceive and to understand, which brings quietude of heart, which is exalted, which is unattainable by reasoning, abstruse, intelligible only to the wise. The people of the world are given to desire, are intent upon desire, delight in desire. My doctrine will not be intelligible to them. Let me, therefore, remain in peace, and not preach the doctrine.'

Then the four-faced Brahma, divining the thought which had arisen in the mind of the Blessed One, reflected:

'If the Blessed One remains in peace and does not preach the doctrine, the world is lost!'

So, with hands folded, he approached the Blessed One and said:

'May the Lord preach the doctrine, may the Blessed One preach the doctrine, may the Perfect One preach the doctrine. There are beings whose eyes are not yet darkened by any dust; if they do not hear the doctrine, they cannot attain salvation. Therefore, may the Stainless One open the door of Immortality to them!'

The Blessed One saw that it was his duty to proclaim the truth revealed unto him, and to trust to its own power for impressing itself upon the minds of men in proportion to each man's individual *karma*. But then the Blessed One thought:

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'To whom shall I preach the doctrine first? Who will understand this doctrine easily?'

After a long deliberation he set forth to Benares. On the way he met a wandering ascetic called Upaka, who said to the Blessed One:

'Thy countenance, friend, is serene; thy complexion is pure and bright. In whose name, friend, hast thou retired from the world? Who is thy teacher? Whose doctrine dost thou profess?'

The Blessed One answered and said:

'I have overcome all foes. I am All-wise. I am free from all stains. I have left behind me everything, and have obtained emancipation by the destruction of desire. Having gained knowledge unassisted, whom should I call my master? I have no teacher. No one is equal to me. In the world of men and of gods no being is like me. I am the Holy One in this world. I am the Teacher. I have gained calm by the extinction of all passion, and have obtained Nirvana. To found the Kingdom of Truth, I go to the city of Benares. I will beat the drum of the Immortal in the darkness of this world.'

Having spoken thus, the Buddha went on his way until he reached the river Ganges, which he had to cross. The ferryman asked him to pay the fare. But as Buddha had no money, he could not pay it. So he flew through the air, and reached the other side. Astonished thereat, the ferryman went to the king of the country, and related to him the miracle performed by Buddha, whereupon the king ordered that thenceforth ascetics should not be charged ferry fare.

Having thus crossed the river, the Blessed One repaired to a place near Benares called the Deer Park, where he met the five Brahmans who had been with him while he practised meditation and starvation under the Bodhi tree in Gaya. The five Brahmans were at first full of conceit. On seeing the Blessed One coming from afar, they communed among themselves, saying:

'Friends, there comes Buddha, who lives in abundance,

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who has given up his austerities, and who has turned to an abundant life. Let us not salute him, nor rise from our seats when he approaches, nor take his bowl and his robe from his hands. But let us put there a seat; if he likes, let him sit down.'

But when the Blessed One drew near they could not keep their agreement. They bowed down to him in reverence with hands folded, and went forth to meet him. His calm, tranquil mien had subdued them.

The Blessed One addressed them, and said:

'Give ear, O Brahmans! To you I will preach the doctrine.'

Then the Blessed One explained to them the doctrine of the Noble Eightfold Path which leads to insight, which leads to wisdom, which leads to calm, to the full enlightenment, to Nirvana.

Thus it came to pass that the Kingdom of Righteousness was first founded in the Deer Park at Benares.

After the five Brahmans a rich treasurer named Yasa embraced the doctrine, and his friends followed. In the course of a few days fifty men became followers of Buddha. This number grew rapidly, many men and women and damsels accepting the new creed, induced thereto partly by its own sublimity and partly by the preacher's miraculous powers. Monarchs followed the example of mortals, and the doctrine spread far and wide over the peninsula of Hindustan, and thence to Nepal and Tibet in the north, to Ceylon in the south, through Burma and China to Japan in the east, until it conquered one-half of the human race.

For many centuries Benares continued the centre of Buddhism, and a great stupa, erected by the Emperor Asoka at Sarnath, about four miles from the city, still marks the spot where the Blessed One preached his first sermon. But a second revolution of the wheel, in the seventh century of our era, converted Benares once more into a capital of the older faith. Hinduism succeeded in eradicating Buddha's doctrine, and in turning Buddha's

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ministers out of their monasteries. It is true that Brahmanism, though revived, could not obliterate the traces of the long Buddhist domination, and Buddha had to be retained in the Hindu hierarchy of gods as one of the incarnations of Vishnu, yet Buddhism itself was dead in the whole of Upper India.

At the present day the only monument of its glory is this great stupa at Sarnath—a solid circular pile, over 100 feet in height, its lower parts of smooth stone, ornamented with bands of beautifully-carved fruit and flowers and neat geometrical patterns, the upper part a rough mound of brick and earth fringed with grass. Its face is adorned at intervals with niches which once must have contained images of the Buddha, and some of the lower stones are at this moment covered with leaves of gold, attached by the Tashi Lama and his followers during their recent pilgrimage to this cradle of their once dominant creed.

The monument was once the centre of a populous city. It now stands in the middle of the silent fields, close to the ruins of a temple and a number of fragments of columns and statues, dug up from the ground, including a stone pillar erected by Asoka. And not far off I see a small cottage, in which dwells a solitary yellow monk, a belated apostle of Nirvana from Ceylon.

The same roof shelters a small school, in which a score of small boys are initiated into the mysteries of the Urdu, Hindi, and English alphabets by a local teacher. They sit on the floor round the room, each boy with a tablet of wood on his knees, a pot of chalk beside him, and a rude reed pen in one hand. He dips the reed into the pot, copies out the characters on the wooden tablet, and so acquires wisdom. Of course, the ultimate aim of the smiling yellow monk, as of other missionaries, is to wean these youths from idolatry. But, methinks, it will be some time ere Buddha's gray gospel is again heard in Benares.

This city, moved by Hinduism triumphant from this polluted site, now spreads along the northern bank of the

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Ganges, the most sacred of rivers, whose sources are on the summit of the mythical mount Meru—the Hindu Olympus round which rise in successive tiers the various paradises and upon which shine the Nine Planets.

To this city I return from the grand desolation of Sarnath, and feel at once in the atmosphere of a living faith. Every inch of its soil is hallowed by some temple, shrine, or legend. Every other inhabitant is a saint, or at least a priest.

Among the temples, most amazing is the one dedicated to the goddess Durga, Siva's dread spouse. The building itself is a small structure of red stone, with small massive gates of brass. From the ceiling of the portico hangs a bell, which the worshipper rings as he enters, in order to wake the goddess. Round the quadrangle runs a cloister, in which devout men sit cross-legged, muttering incomprehensible prayers. And over cloisters, columns, and cornices scamper hundreds of sacred apes, the younger sort playing practical jokes on one another, the elders engaged in the more serious occupation of tending their offspring, of scratching their rivals' faces, and of rushing for the roasted Indian corn which the pious throw to them. In the enclosure of the temple stands the block on which are immolated the sacrificial victims.

On landing in India you experience a feeling of relief to find yourself at last in the midst of frank idolatry, after so many centuries of the other thing. Your dormant memories of classical polytheism spring to life again, and you dream of Homeric hecatombs. Would that you never awoke from your dream!

It is the feast of Durga, and you join the myriads of worshippers who throng to her sanctuary, each leading by a string a little kid. The sight of the victim makes your heart feel a trifle heavy. You enter the enclosure of the temple, and you see the grim executioner standing close to the block, with a long curved knife in his hand, and his feet deep in a pool of dark, clotted gore. Your heart sinks. The sinking grows into physical sickness as kid

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after kid is rapidly snatched up and brought to the block, bleating for mercy, and you see little head after little head fall into the basket, little body after little body convulsed in the spasms of death. It is the death-blow to your æsthetic craving for sacrificial scenes.

Here is no ritual cloak to hide the horror of slaughter; but the tragedy, stripped of all theatrical pomp, appears in all its nauseating nudity, and your soul revolts at the cold-blooded, butcher-like brutality of the spectacle.

Less revolting, though hardly less humiliating, is the homage paid to the bull of Durga's husband—a grotesque monster of stone painted red, sitting between a holy well and a shrine in which stands a small image of the All-Destroyer and his amiable wife. Crowds of devotees press round the bull of stone, men and women adorning its upturned nostrils with marigold blossoms, sprinkling its legs with holy water, laying votive garlands and grain at its feet, touching its sides with their foreheads, and then departing consoled. Up above the bull hangs a punkah, intended to keep the thing of stone cool during the hot weather, and at night it is covered with blankets.

Close by, amid a swarm of other shrines, stands the holiest of all holy fanes—the Bisheshwar, or Golden Temple. In it is enshrined a plain stone—very square and very sacred—being the symbol of the god Siva, monarch among the gods who reign over the city of Benares; for Bhaironath, the special guardian deity of the city, mighty as he is, is, after all, only Siva's minister of police. The whole net of narrow lanes round this temple is crawling with pilgrims, many of them come from afar in search of consolation.

They come from north, south, east, and west, male and female, young and old, sick and sound, fair and foul, all eager to worship at this great sanctuary of Hindustan, and to prepare themselves for that other pilgrimage from which no pilgrim has ever returned in the same form.

Here they come in long procession, each pilgrim with a bamboo stick across his shoulder, from which are

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suspended his brass bowl, his gourd, and two baskets containing bottles in which he will carry home some of the water of the Ganges—if he ever returns home; for the walls of the bazaar are efflorescent with advertisements of specifics for plague and cholera and other things that tend to make return uncertain. Furthermore, the sight is not uncommon of a pilgrim, in various stages of weariness or illness, lying by the roadside, or of a holy mendicant, too weak to complete his round of depredation, sinking suddenly in the street exhausted. But what of that? Benares is a city to which men come ready to face eternity.

Besides these itinerant wretches, many elderly widows, bereft of hope in this world, betake themselves with their savings to the city which affords the surest passport into a better. Their migration is based on the hope of speedy dissolution. But the Old Resident sadly observes that their purses are too short, and Benares, on the whole, too healthy. Consequently death is apt to be unduly slow in coming, and meanwhile many of these tall, rickety houses teem with aged ladies, striving to hide the pain and the shame of hunger in the darkness of their unwholesome attics. Then, there are the starving students of theology and the families of the sick who come here for recovery, and find a happy release from life, leaving their wives and orphans to continue their earthly pilgrimage alone and helpless. The bread of faith is good; but even in Benares man cannot live on metaphors alone.

I thread my way through this maze of lanes, so dusky, so dirty, so crooked, and so crowded with pilgrims, pariah dogs, pundits, cows, fanatics, and peddlers, jostling one another. On either side totter the houses, high and overhanging, with small windows aloft and below small shops redolent of religion. Here are sold Sanskrit volumes of sacred lore; there dangle strings of rosaries. On one counter I see reels of the thread worn by the Brahmans across the breast; on another bundles of the sticks used for cleaning the teeth; on a third baskets of yellow

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marigold. And amid these implements of sanctity sit the money-changers, who provide the coin which the priests love. On every side gape niches holding images of the gods, and at every corner stands a shrine—a tiny white-washed summer-house with a pillared portico—enclosing an idol which the faithful sprinkle as they pass with drops of holy water from their brass bowls, or adorn with wreaths and blossoms.

Here is an ascetic, seated behind a brazier of charcoal, shivering in a place where normal humanity perspires. But he is not normal. His arms are withered to the bone, his legs are rigid, his eyes are fixed in vacancy. He is a saint. Having long bidden farewell to the senses, he is now revelling in the passionless joys of an imaginary heaven. He is true to his celestial chimera. He is consistent with himself. He is happy.

A little further on I come face to face with another naked ascetic, lying on a bed bristling with three-pronged nails. He reclines on this horrible couch as comfortably as an Anglo-Indian reclines on his long cane-chair, and far more gracefully. Theoretically, he also holds that it is a good man's duty to make a hell of this life in order to inherit paradise in the next. But the nails, I perceive, are not so sharp as they appear at a distance. He is a holy humbug. But he also is happy, or, at all events, plump.

At every step I collide with a sacred beggar, a sacred bull, a haggard widow, a holy cow, a pilgrim, or a corpse, and suddenly I am brought to a standstill by a procession of the elephant-headed god Ganesh, carried in a litter, with a crowd of ash-sprinkled, absurd fakirs shouting behind and a band shrieking in front. The sacred shell wails dolorously, and the brass instruments bray 'For he is a jolly good fellow!'

It is a picturesque chaos—a Drury Lane melodrama set in a labyrinth of Eastern gods. It is Benares. It possesses and fascinates you. But the possession gradually becomes an obsession, and your Western soul, satiated

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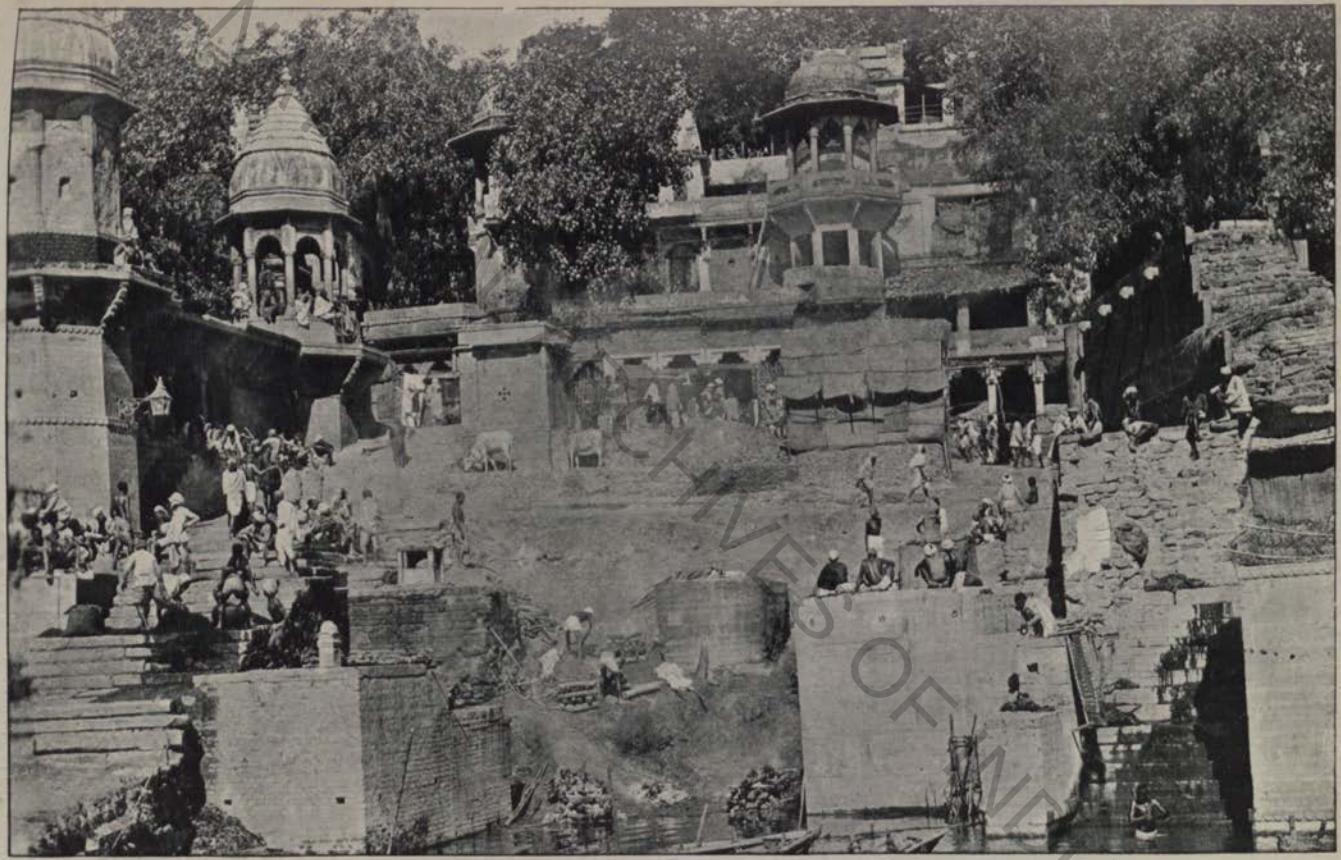
with spiritual hallucinations and the clash of creeds, pants for the freedom of the open air. Fortunately the last act is close at hand.

In front of me I perceive a lumbering buffalo loaded with firewood. He staggers unsteadily down the tortuous lane, and I follow him through the mud which proclaims the vicinity of the river. Soon we both emerge into an open space on the bank of the Ganges. It is the burning ghat. The buffalo kneels down amid the Brahmans and the barbers, the peddlers, the pilgrims, and the cows. The wood is taken off his back, and built up into a small pyre. A human body lies close by, wrapt up in a white shroud, and tied to a framework of bamboo. The pyre completed, it is placed upon it, with the feet towards the river. A few pieces of wood are put on top of it, the mouth is touched with a burning torch, and then the whole is ignited. Gradually the flames blaze up, the man in attendance stokes the fire with a long stick, the body is slowly reduced to ashes and smoke, and the breeze bears to your nostrils a smell which ought to be, but is not, unpleasant.

The relatives of the deceased squat on an elevated platform over the pyre, the chief mourner conspicuous by his clean-shaven head, and they watch the process with scarce a sign of emotion. Now the fire is dying out for want of food. The man in charge throws the ashes into the river, and some poor wretches try to rescue from the stream as much of the charcoal as they can. No one objects, for the ashes are safe in the water, which has the power to wash off sin even after death. Here, again, as in the sacrifice, you are revolted by the absence of all attempt to cloak the horrors of death. The whole thing is done in a cold, bare, perfectly business-like fashion.

In this case cremation was complete; but I am assured that the bodies of children under six years of age are not burnt at all, but simply thrown into the Ganges, while the bodies of people whose relatives cannot afford sufficient firewood are thrown into the river scarcely singed, for the

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BURNING THE DEAD, BENARES.

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Ganges hallows whatsoever it swallows, and its crocodiles digest it. Frequently bodies are seen floating on the water, and now and again a crocodile shot and ripped open is found harbouring within its stomach bangles, earrings, or human limbs—the leg of a man, or the arm of a child. So much concerning the dead.

Near the ghat stand many stones, set up in memory of the widows who were once burnt alive with their husbands. The custom (*sati*), though rare, is by no means extinct. Not long ago thirteen men were charged with assisting at such a function in Behar. The facts, as set forth in the magistrates' commitment order, constitute a scene which would satisfy the most exacting patron of frenzied fiction.

A certain Brahman died in the village Sanchani on October 8, 1904, and his body was taken to the bank of the neighbouring stream in order to be cremated. Then the widow, having bathed in the river, and adorned herself as for her marriage, took her seat on the pyre, and called on her son to do his duty as a devout Hindu. The son lighted some wheat-stalks, and, having walked round the pyre three times, applied, according to custom, the fire to the mouth of the deceased. This failed to ignite the pyre, and he, with four other Brahmans, proceeded to perform the *humad*, a rite consisting of the burning of incense and the placing of lighted chips of wood, dipped in ghee, under the pyre until it is ignited.

By this time a vast crowd had assembled.

The widow turned towards the setting sun, and when the flames reached her, she moved and writhed about. Finally, she stood up and turned towards the setting sun; but immediately, overcome by the smoke and heat, she fell back into the flames, and was burnt to ashes with the corpse of her husband, amidst cries of

'Sath Ram,
Sita Ram,
Sati Mai,
Ki Jai,'

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the beating of drums, the clangour of cymbals, and the blowing of the sacred shell.

The case came to the sessions, and the jury returned a unanimous verdict of guilty against five of the accused, who were sentenced for culpable homicide and abetment of suicide. Similar cases of *sati* I have now and again seen chronicled, without comment, in the native journals, among current events.

Now, it may be worth while to understand a little what we condemn. The widow is never driven to death. In many cases the *sati* is an act of suicide dictated by the religious sense of the victim, and consecrated by immemorial tradition. In other cases it is forced upon her by the iron rule of public opinion, and by her own dread of widowhood. The fidelity to the departed husband's shade which once compelled all respectable women to burn themselves on his funeral pyre nowadays manifests itself usually in the practice which dooms young wives to perpetual widowhood, and all the domestic degradation and filthy misery which that estate involves, even when the bride, wedded in her cradle, is widowed in the nursery. The woman who has lost her husband is regarded as one cursed of Heaven and capable of communicating her curse to the rest of the family. What is more, she believes herself in deep earnest to be accursed and to deserve her loathsome lot. Under these conditions it is easy to understand her willingness to escape self-contempt through the one door left open to her. This is the seamy side of *sati*. But it has another side. There are many instances in which the sacrifice was an act, not of self-destruction only, but of self-devotion, noble and ennobling. From that point of view its condemnation by the law as a crime is ludicrous. At least, I have for this statement the authority of a highly-educated Indian gentleman, and Sister Lucretia pronounces the custom admirable. But, then, she is not a Hindu widow, any more than is the highly-educated Indian gentleman.

For my part, as I walked between those memorial

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stones, I felt haunted by the rumble of funeral drums, the clangour of cymbols, the shrill blast of the sacred shell, and the weird chorus:

'Sath Ram,
Sita Ram,
Sati Mai,
Ki Jai,'

and I again saw the widow falling into the flames, with her eyes turned to the setting sun.

But enough of things funereal.

A witty Frenchman once said that, if you want to seize the spirit and the beauty of a place, you must know how to sit down. In Benares it is easy to do so. I descend the slippery bank, and, stepping into one of the numerous houseboats which throng the riverside, I sit down on a basket chair. The boat moves off, and we glide smoothly on the bosom of Mother Ganges.

Here the stream bends into a broad bay, along the steep northern bank of which roam the temples and palaces, shrines and preaching canopies, sacred cows and bulls of Benares, with flights of steep stairs of marble struggling up between the tall buildings. Down these stairs come the women of the city with their brass vessels. They fill them from the river, and, lifting them on their heads, they climb up the steps slowly, jingling their silver anklets. Now and then a sunbeam, darting between the buildings, lingers for a moment upon the brass vessel or silver anklet of the ascending figure. There is a bright glint through the gloom, and next moment vessel and anklet and draped figure are lost in the dark narrow lane aloft.

Down below, along the margin of the river, stretch the broad bathing-ghats—spots pathetic with the credulity of immemorial millions. Five among these ghats are pre-eminent for holiness. To bathe from one of them is to insure pardon for all sins past and to come and to earn eternal salvation. One is ascribed to the goddess Durga herself. It appears that, after a million years' duel with two ambitious demons, she threw her victorious sword on

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this spot, and lo! the sword in falling cut out this channel, which the goddess, thereupon, blessed with the gift of cutting away the sins of her worshippers. Another flight of steps derives its name from Brahma's sacrifice of ten horses. On one side of it stands the shrine of Sita, the goddess of small-pox, and on the other a shrine of Siva. Beneath a third five rivers meet, all endowed with a variety of miraculous virtues. Just above a fourth there yawns a well, into which Parvati, Siva's spouse, once dropped her earring. Therefore, in this well, many seek a remedy for disease, and often find it. Not far off is a tank containing a wondrous stone, which grows daily by the size of one grain of millet—but the wonders of Benares are as inexhaustible as the waters of Mother Ganges, the faith of her worshippers, or the greed of her ministers.

These ghostly persons squat along the river-bank, under broad umbrellas of palm leaf, seeking whom they may fleece. Nor is there any lack of victims. All the bathing ghats are at this morning hour alive with pilgrims of all castes and complexions, and the right to initiate them into the mysteries of baptism is a cause for which many a sacerdotal nose has bled. Here they come—Mahrattas, Bengalees, Punjabis, Pathans, natives of Nepal—all eager to wash off their sins in the waves of the Ganges, each flock under the guidance of a pastor, who conducts it to the edge of the river with many a muttered prayer and minute instruction. Now the pilgrims plunge, men and women, and, standing in the water, wash their faces. Then they emerge, purified of the past and fortified for the future, their draperies clinging to their limbs, their hair dripping with mud, their faces shining with spiritual exaltation.

Wealthy citizens have their own private piers, which protrude far into the water, and upon which the bather completes his toilet, tells his beads, and recites his prayers at leisure. Upon similar piers also lie the sick, tended by their friends, and looking into Mother Ganges wistfully for health, or at least for a grave.

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High above all soar the palaces of the pious princes whom we have visited in various parts of India—Indore, Udaipur, Jaipur, Gwalior—full of old men and women come to end their days here. One great mansion of stone lies prostrate on the river-bank—a magnificent memorial of a bygone flood. But at this hour Mother Ganges, oblivious of sterner moods and old tragedies, smiles serenely under the rays of the sun. And the crowd goes on creeping up and down the sacred steps, while many a column of blue smoke curls up from many a funeral pyre. It is a picture in which the grand and the pathetic mingle strangely with the preposterous and the gruesome, abolishing all your preconceived ideas of beauty and piety. Your mind is gripped by a mighty doubt as to its own sanity; but it is a doubt that causes no serious inconvenience, for the sun shines up above and the blue river flows calmly beneath, and both are things eminently sane.

Suddenly, from the midst of all this paganism shoots up the great mosque of Aurangzeb. It is, of course, built with the spoils of a Hindu temple, for in Benares, as elsewhere, the hand of Allah may be seen grasping what it created not, reaping where other gods have laboured, and building upon the ruins of the vanquished. It stands scornfully upon the crest of the steep cliff, its massive breastworks spreading down the bank, its slender minarets tapering up into the blue of the sky, a relic of a triumph that is past. For Mahomed has failed in Benares as surely as Buddha, and the faith of Brahma flourishes now as ever.

Only last October a new temple was consecrated at yonder ghat, and in it was installed Siva, the All-Destroyer, in strict accordance with the traditions of old, including rich gifts to the pundits and Brahmans and a permanent refuge for destitute pilgrims and religious students. For the maintenance of the establishment the pious founder has allotted two lakhs of rupees and many acres of land. Munificence to the gods and their ministers still is in India the most meritorious method by which man can aspire to

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immortality, and the Maharaja was acclaimed by the citizens of Benares as an enlightened man.

Another event showing the vigour of Hinduism in a city where Mahomedan mosques and Christian missions mark the discomfiture of rivals old and new, is the recent visit of a certain holy man, Harribole Thakur by name, who came with a body of disciples, chanting, curing the sick, and altogether creating an immense sensation. Other parts of India may have succumbed to the violence of foreign conquerors and the fervour of new creeds. Benares still is what she was in the beginning: the impregnable citadel of Hinduism, the oracle of orthodoxy, and a short cut to heaven.

The sun has set across the Ganges; the stars have not yet risen. It is that grim and hollow truce between day and darkness which men out here persist, with unconscious cynicism, in calling twilight. It is the borderland between the world of deeds and the world of dreams.

The cows are coming home from their pastures, lowing sadly, their humps drooping as though under the weight of immemorial transmigrations. The crows also are seeking their nests for the night, and all the space in creation that is left vacant by the lowing of the cattle is filled by the hoarse cawing of the birds. How harsh it sounds, how sinister, how unholy! It makes one think of dead bodies unburied.

The flying-foxes—giant bats—are flapping their wings noiselessly in the air; and their dark, ghostly forms, as they sail across the pale heavens, add an uncanny feeling to the gathering shadows.

From yon screen of mango-trees come the voices of the servants chanting sleepily in the gloom. The song is mournful, but the singers are, no doubt, happy. It is a happiness subtler than the happiness of joy, this happiness which man finds in his misery, and more enduring than life. It is spirit-soothing, and it exhausts not that on which it feeds. It is restful and everlasting as death.

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Has not solitude also its song, and is there no poetry in old cemeteries? And here I am in the greatest and oldest of all cemeteries—a land peopled with the tombs of the past, the very air heavy with the dust of things dead. The song of those servants is the latest echo, borne to me across the centuries, of a music that was old in Abraham's babyhood.

Hark! ding, dong; ding, dong; ding, dong. The bell of the mission church down in the plain penetrates the dolorous chant with its smart, aggressive, masterful clangour: dong, dong, dong . . . dong, dong, dong . . . dong, dong. . . .

How familiar it sounds, and yet how foreign by the banks of the Ganges; and how superfluous! Carrying creeds to Hindustan—is it not like carrying coals to Newcastle? Convert the Hindus! You might as hopefully attempt to convert the Pyramids. These ancient patriarchs who have lived so long, seen so much, suffered so much, and survived so much, are they to be instructed in the mysteries of the grave by men of yesterday? It is not creed, my friend, that India needs, but character.

But the message the good missionaries bring to India is not really that which they think. The means they use is the real end, and their most effective sermons are those which they never preach.

Far away to the south the railway-engine whistles shrilly. That is the message. It is the voice of the West calling unto the East: Sister, wake! . . .

Then all sounds human and of things human are hushed; a subtle smell mingles with the dusk, and deeper grows the gloom. Night has fallen, soft and swift, as it falls on the plains.

A fire-fly gleams intermittently across the shade of the trees, its cold, tremulous light illumining nothing but itself, and the cricket begins his song. It is a land where the cricket chirps all through the year, and his song is monotonous and mournful, like that of the other natives of the land. In the solitude of the night he is your companion

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and your counsellor. But he only brings the refrain to a music of other than terrestrial birth. Your eye is subject to the power of the night as well as your ear. The stars sparkle up above in their myriads. Heaven and earth murmur the majesty and the mystery and, alas! also the monotony of things. The soporific spell of the East is upon you. It is a spell potent enough to make a philosopher of a shoeblack or of a schoolmaster—a philosopher or a fakir.

Yet, in the midst of your captivity you feel strangely free. The fetters of personality have fallen from off your soul, as by the touch of a magician's wand. You have attained peace. Is it the peace of everlasting life or of everlasting sleep? Are you in Calypso's fairy grotto or in Circe's pigsty? You cannot tell, you care not to inquire.

Detached from yourself, you are borne aloft on the wings of an unseen power. Higher and higher you soar, unresisting; but your eyes are turned to the earth. You see the smallness of terrestrial things. You see your old self far below: how puny he looks; how paltry the things for which he battles! You smile at him sadly.

Higher you soar and yet higher. The earth has dwindled to a speck in the abyss below. You are confronted with the infinity of creation. You are absorbed in the universal—heaven and earth are no longer; you are no longer; nothing is but a great immensity—endless, shapeless, vaguely terrible. . . .

But you are a novice at celestial flights. You are too modern, too Western, too young for the empyrean. Your wings are tired, the secret power has lost its virtue, and down you come back to solid earth again.

It is all a matter of perspective, you reflect. Yes, but things that may seem small when viewed from the standpoint of the stellar universe are stupendous when seen from your own arm-chair. To me at this moment yon earthy fire-fly looms larger—*is* larger—than any member of that heavenly chorus of immeasurable magnitudes which whirl through eternal space over yon vast fair of light

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and mystery. It may be, as the Enlightened One will have it, all illusion. *Quid tum?* I am part of that illusion, and must play my part therein.

But though roused—or is it reduced?—to sanity, you are no longer the same person. Through the silence of the stars a voice has spoken. The lesson the night has taught abides with you by day. You have brought back from the empyrean a torch which will illumine many dark nooks. Rhythm and order are now revealed in what was formerly chaos. You now understand the man of the East. You understand the fascination which the enigma of existence has for the Eastern mind—the eternal questions: How? Why? Whence? Whither? the desire to penetrate into the origin, the meaning and the purpose of things. All these cosmic riddles grow more important in your eyes than any sublunary problems, domestic, political, or social, ever were.

And when you find Herbert Spencer better known among educated Indians than Conan Doyle, and a work on the Immortality of the Soul more popular than any detective story, you are no longer surprised. Nor are you any longer astonished at the Indian fellow-traveller who on board the steamer studied 'The Religions of the World,' while your English friends were skimming the 'Molly Monologues' or the 'Joys of Jehovah.' You are no longer puzzled to find the native daily Press teeming with notices of nightmares like these: 'The Real and the Apparent Man,' 'The Ideal of Universal Religion,' 'Imitation of Buddha,' etc. You have mastered the fact, queer and undeniable, that the subtleties of metaphysics thrill the Eastern heart more deeply than the amours of armoured knight and lady fair ever thrilled the hearts of your medieval ancestors, or fiscal problems ever thrilled their degenerate son, and you know why it is so.

* * * * *

Such is the East as she appears to the Western eye—aged, disappointed, dispirited; dull, inert, resigned; knowing no moderation; giving to speculation the time she

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ought to devote to action; underfed and over-philosophic; —fatalism and supine apathy interrupted at times by emotional extravagance; ascetic and tolerant mysticism suddenly, if rarely, superseded by wild fanaticism. Millions of passive believers spurred now and again to frenzy by a Messiah, or a Mahdi, or a Mullah. But, as a rule, enormous forces slumbering the sleep of Epimenides. Everywhere you are confronted with the wisdom of age and its dignity, with the infirmity of age and its decay.

Such is the East, still unchanged in her depths, but on the highroad to great changes. The old lady is no longer allowed to spin her metaphysical cobwebs in peace. For good or for evil—who can tell or need trouble to inquire? —she is now disturbed from her senile dreams by a fashionable and forward young wench who, herself unable to sleep, will suffer no one else to do so.

She is bursting with high activity, this young person, and will not rest until she has stirred the aged dame to the joys of this life, the miseries of this life, the sordid ambitions of this life—to what she calls a sense of human power and responsibility; to the superior beauty of inquiry over acquiescence. Will she succeed?

Let us look more closely at this self-appointed guardian of the universe. Having succeeded in shaking herself more or less free from the thraldom to the spiritual, she is strenously pursuing material aims through material means. Action, conquest, physical culture, plain-thinking and rapid living—these are her aspirations. She is young, she is confident, she is optimistic. What chance has the poor aged East against such a champion of emancipation?

The struggle is a struggle between two great powers: 'to do' pitted against 'to be.' What will the result be? The present observer does not feel competent, or, indeed, bound, to prophesy. And yet, unless Japan is a freak, prophecy is not so hard a matter. To Japan applies every word said in the foregoing pages regarding the East generally. I read that in Japan, as in India, man is taught that personal glory or gain is nothing; that the individual

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must sacrifice himself to the community; that all that the living man does is done to earn the approbation of the dead. Caste, poverty, humility, self-denial—these, I understand, are the Japanese ideals. Now, these are ideals in which I firmly do not believe, as producers of what we call success. They may enable a man to climb to heaven, but nowhere else. And yet Japan has succeeded. Her success, I suppose, is due to a modification of those ideals. India is more logical and more uncompromising. But perhaps it is only a question of time. At all events, in India at this hour the wrestle between the two powers is far, very far, from being decided.



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CHAPTER XXV

A DAY IN THE DOAB, AND SOME REFLECTIONS

A VAST alluvial plain, green, flat, and uninspiring. Embraced by the Ganges on one side, and the Jumna on the other, this broad expanse of verdure, even in this year of little water, smiles the fat, complacent smile of one who knows not the horrors of famine.

Here and there the eye, sad with excess of pleasure, is met by the dry, white glitter of patches of salt-crusted desolation, and it hails these interludes to the monotony of colour with the same perverse gratitude with which the ear, wearied of Beethovian and Wagnerian melodies, receives the arid banalities of the street organ.

In the midst of the district slumbers its obsolete city Koil—a city of drowsy tradesmen, shabby ekkas, tumble-down dwellings, and decrepit little donkeys—clustering under the scant shadow of a mosque, modern and dilapidated—for the Asiatic never repairs. This mosque is perched on a little hill, or big mound, which springs from the plain like the boss in the centre of an old shield. Round this modest height clusters not only the capital but also the history of the Doab.

The origin of the city is traced by popular tradition to a hero of the race of the Moon, and its appellation to another hero, Balaram, the slayer of demons, who thought fit to commemorate one of his performances by bestowing on the city the name of one of his victims, Kol. From this period of fiends and their victorious foes we pass by a heroic stride to the times of the Rajput chiefs who ruled over Koil and its lands until the end of the twelfth cen-

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tury. Then they were forced to yield the sceptre to the Mahomedan invaders, who came, under Kutab-ud-din, seeking glory for their Prophet and acres for themselves. On the approach of the apostle, all those who were, in the words of the Mahomedan chronicler, 'wise and shrewd,' hastened to embrace the new creed, while all those who foolishly prized conviction above comfort were granted the crown of martyrdom which they deserved.

Next came the fiery Timur, and Koil shared the sorrows of the rest of India, until the reign of Akbar, when it became part of a solid and united Empire. The religious ardour of Islam at its zenith is still visible in the numerous shrines and worshippers of Allah which render the district the stronghold of a vigorous and self-conscious Mahomedanism. But, if the mosques and tombs of Koil proclaim the triumph of the Koran, its large population of sacred monkeys affords even more emphatic evidence of the vitality of the older faith. Indeed, two-thirds of the inhabitants are still Hindus, and the two communities prove at times of festivity that they are not utterly insensible to the charm of religious antagonism. An insult offered by a procession of Mahomedan revellers to a monkey or to a peepul-tree is sufficient to rouse the dormant antipathy to fury, and then there is much brandishing of sticks and bleeding of noses.

Aligarh, or Ali's Fort—a large fort surrounded by a deep moat outside the city—forms a standing memorial of the later history of the district. The power and piety of the Moghuls had to bow in time before the power and the rapacity of the Mahrattas; these conquerors made place for the Jats; the Jats, in their turn, were expelled by the Afghans; the Afghans succumbed to the reanimated greed of the Mahrattas; and these, under the French adventurer Perron, held Ali's Fort till 1803, when the British, under Lord Lake, after a battle that was no battle, encamped under its walls, to find them defended by a formidable coalition of French intelligence and Mahratta courage. But neither availed. After a vigorous assault

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the fort was subdued, and with it the whole of this plain.

The peace was broken during the Mutiny, when Koil for a few weeks was converted into a scene of pillage and arson, until the precarious alliance between Hindu and Mahomedan came to its predestined end, the older feuds awoke to their customary fury, the house divided against itself fell with the facility natural to such houses, and the district relapsed into submission, henceforth to form an administrative section of the British Raj, the seat whereof is in the civil station of Aligarh—a suburban excrescence of the native city of Koil, but separated from it by centuries of culture and oceans of racial aloofness. The only proof of sympathy between the white station and the black town that I have been able to discover is due to the agency of a demon. It came about as follows:

There lived a few years ago in Koil a certain Hindu whose children were in the habit of dying prematurely. The afflicted father consulted a learned and pious Brahman, who attributed the calamity to the agency of an evil demon, and advised him, in order to baffle the demon's malignity, to give to his next born a strange name. Soon after the Hindu's wife gave birth to a boy. Mr. Smith was then magistrate of Aligarh. The Hindu reflected: 'What name can be more potent to ward off evil than the great Sahib's?' The upshot of this cogitation is a number of black urchins in Koil known by the name of Smith.

But it is rarely that the observer can discern even a demoniacal connection between a native city and the Anglo-Indian colony which rusticates in its immediate neighbourhood; as a rule, the relations of the two are characterized by mutual and total indifference, almost amounting to ignorance of each other's existence.

They are very small, these Anglo-Indian colonies, and very quaint—tiny bits of Europe dropped into the map of Asia, as if by a merry freak of the gods, and vaguely conscious of their incongruity. The picture of one may serve for all. A score of straggling huts that try to look

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like houses; each hut surmounted by a roof of straw sloping unevenly on all sides, and resting on a low arched veranda. This is the Anglo-Indian bungalow: a pastoral palace in the middle of a garden shaded by the peepul, the banyan, or the neem, scented by the soporific fragrance of mango blossoms, and shielded by a hedge of aloe or cactus from the inroads of the sacred, lawless bulls. In this garden there is a plot in which each household grows its own cabbages, and a pond in which it breeds its own mosquitoes.

The colony spreads over an area out of all proportion to its population, for every one of its score of bungalows sprawls in thatched isolation, preaching silently, yet emphatically, the lesson that Asiatics and other common animals may love to herd together; the sahib, like the lion, prefers to be alone.

Frequently the colony consists of a few military men, who teach the sorrows of discipline to a detachment of turbaned troops; a few Civil Servants, who teach the joys of justice and taxation to the children of the soil; and a contingent of apostles of various denominations, determined to convert the children of the soil to a faith on which they themselves cannot agree.

A day spent in such a station is a nightmare for ever. The first sound that wakes you at dawn is the dull whoofing of the monkeys in the compound, and the last sound that lulls you to sleep at night is the yelling of the jackals outside. In the daytime the green parrots chatter on the thatch overhead, and the brown servants on the veranda; so that it is good to escape from their guttural garrulity into the open air. There the wasps buzz in the sunlight, the birds twitter sleepily in the shade of the trees, and the squirrels run up and down the trunks, trilling absurdly. The kites, crows, and vultures sail across the blue of the sky, tacking and veering with great amplitude of wing; and the butterflies flit aimlessly from shrub to shrub. Now and then is heard the crowing of a distant cock, and, as the sun declines, you are depressed

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by the insistent wail of the wild dove and the melancholy monotone of the koel. In the daytime this bird utters a lugubrious cry, suggesting no sound ever heard in Christendom; its evening call is a sepulchral combination of the call of an Indian cuckoo and the hooting of a Christian owl.

It is the last note of day defeated, and, hark! from yonder comes the first voice of night, triumphant and discordant. It is the voice of a sweet-vendor, singing his unwholesome viands aloud, at intervals, as he goes down the road:

'Badam er nokol daná,
Tatká Chadjá, ellaché daná.'

The chant grows fainter and fainter in the distance. Now you can scarcely hear it. Now it is dead and gone, and the mind doubts whether it has actually heard it, or dreamt of it.

It is all profoundly strange to you, and to you profoundly grotesque: the people who dwell in the land, and the gods whom they worship; the beasts of the field, the fowls of heaven, the smells which fill the air—yea, the very trees and vegetables and flowers which grow from the soil; all things, save the stars that sparkle in the sky—and even these shine with a light that is new. All is alien to you, and you are a stranger in the land.

You repair to the sanctuary, round which centres the life of the European colony. There, at least, you think, you will find a world which you understand. It turns out to be a sanctuary of billiards, bridge, whisky and soda; and it is designated the Club. Here all the world assembles evening after evening, the ladies in one room, the gentlemen in another, and forthwith the more strenuous among them devote themselves to the card-table. The remnant seek spiritual consolation in the conscientious perusal of the old newspapers. Among these teachers the most highly revered are *Punch*, *Truth*, and the *Sporting Times*—for the Anglo-Indian, if not a great wit, is a great sportsman, and his wife speaks of tigers in terms of con-

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siderable familiarity, almost of contempt. A savoury scandal now and then comes to stir the stagnant waters of the social pool, and to remind the man and woman of the mofussil that they belong to civilization. But, for the rest, life to the denizen of an Anglo-Indian station means what it meant to the ancient Bœotians.

Aligarh, however, is a station differing in several important respects from the typical. It is entirely civil, and almost entirely secular; some of its bungalows have exchanged the picturesque thatch for a tiled roof; the place of the febriculous tank is, in some cases, filled by a deep well, up and down whose incline toil the patient bullocks, straining at the huge bucket painfully; the gardens bloom with multitudinous beauty; the monkeys confine their operations to the native city; and, lastly, the station possesses a distinctive feature and a fountain of stimulating rivalry in the great Mahomedan Anglo-Oriental College. It was this institution that caused the Prince and Princess of Wales to honour Aligarh with a fleeting, private visit on the eve of their departure from India, and me to accord it a place in these pages.

The college was founded in 1875 with the object of rousing the Mahomedans of India from their proud lethargy, and enabling them to compete with their Hindu rivals in the race for prosperity generally, and Government patronage especially. The State schools, while affording to all sects alike the means of advancement in this life, make no provision for the next. The Mahomedans wanted an institution capable of insuring success in both worlds. The result was this establishment, begun as a small school of fifty boys, and now numbering eight hundred students of all ages, who live, five or six together, round spacious courts, reading in big books, riding on horses, praying five times a day in a beautiful private mosque, and playing tennis, hockey, cricket, and football, with their white shirts flowing outside their baggy trousers, and the tassels of their fezes dangling gracefully behind.

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Thus equipped with accomplishments both sacred and profane, the bearded graduates sally forth into the world eager for the fray and carrying the gospel of intellectual and muscular emancipation to their bigoted brethren in the four quarters of the globe; for among these curiously-attired youths I have found not only natives of all parts of India, but also sons of Persia, Arabia, and Africa, both Sunnis and Shiahs, sent by their parents to the one institution in the East which affords a successful blend of ancient piety and modern culture such as the true believer needs.

Despite this wide appreciation, however, and an official encouragement which the Hindus describe by the nasty name of favouritism, the college is still engaged in a constant struggle with the forces of popular obscurantism, whose hostility is chiefly manifested in a passive resistance to all appeals for financial support. Nevertheless, the Mahomedan Anglo-Oriental College of Aligarh has vindicated its utility by its growth.

To me the real significance of this institution lies in the fact that it is a fruit of indigenous effort. It is the practical expression of a conviction, formed by certain Mahomedan gentlemen of the district thirty years ago, that an obstinate adherence to the traditions and the methods of the past was incompatible with success in the present. These men realized that their community could not recover the position which it once held, unless it adopted a system of education consonant with modern thought. Its rapid growth proves that, despite opposition, inevitable and intelligible, the idea which gave birth to the college is gaining ground even among the least progressive section of the Indian people.

Nor is this an isolated instance. India, as a whole, is at this moment going through a kind of agitation similar to that which Europe went through five hundred years ago, or—an even closer parallel—to that of Israel in the middle of the eighteenth century. She is in the throes of her Renaissance. The old warfare between Humanism

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and Obscurantism is revived here under a new form, and it is not hard to recognise in the India of to-day all the characteristic products of a period of transition, from the extreme worshipper of all that is Western to the extreme zealot for all that is Eastern. The fascination of the new impels some to iconoclasm; the charm of the familiar inspires more with conservatism. The shallow renegade and the fanatical reactionary are both here at this hour. But between these two extremists, each intoxicated with his peculiar enthusiasm, there is growing a class of sober thinkers who, recognising what the West has to teach them, frankly welcome the lesson; but, also, recognising what the West cannot teach, smile indulgently. This is the class which, I think, will prevail in the end. But that end still is very distant. Occidental culture has as yet touched only the fringe of the Indian world. The women of India have hardly as yet felt the breath of the new spirit, while the peasants still are in the condition in which they were as far back as our knowledge of the history of man goes. And it is perhaps essential to remember that the women form more than one-half of the section which has come, however feebly, under Occidental influence, and that this section itself, compared with the whole, is like one tree in a jungle. Yes, the end still is very distant.

Meanwhile, India's temperament is clearly illustrated by her temples. A Hindu temple may be considered as an embodiment in stone of the genius of the country. There are no alpine peaks here, but the highest summit is a level tableland; no deep valleys, but boundless plains. India knows no lively conflict between sombre, snow-clad mountain and smiling meadow. Everything is dull, placid, and passive, conducing to meditation and to idleness. The dominant note is breadth and rest rather than loftiness or action. I cannot imagine a native of this country producing a drama.

The spire of the West exists here only as an exotic and inartistic monument to the foreigner's æsthetic callous-

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ness. But even the tapering minaret of Turkey, which already in Egypt has lost much of its aërial lightness and jejune grace, here has dwindled altogether in height and multiplied in number. The houses are distinguished by the flat roof and not by the pointed gable. Their arches and cloisters, which succeed one another in an endless arithmetical progression, show no originality of conception either in their plan or in their ornaments, but only an infinite patience in execution. Incredible multiplicity of detail and absence of individuality are the characteristics of a land rich in artisans, but singularly poor in artists.

These are to some extent characteristics common to the whole of the East. Already in the ancient Egyptian sculptures you see the limbs clinging to the body, stiff and lifeless, and the figures repeating themselves in indefinite series, all alike in expression and attitude, none daring to distinguish itself from its fellows.

Also note the absence of all effort at organic combination. In the sculptures of India there are no groups, but only aggregates of units. Look at these units again. The image of a Hindu god is a masterpiece of slavish industry, arm added to arm, eye to eye, and head to head, until an attempt to express the omnipotence and omniscience of the deity results in a revolting monstrosity.

The West has achieved her highest triumphs by simplification. The East still carries on the more primitive process of amplification. Look at embroidery and carving, pattern within pattern, painstaking, minute and barbaric. Listen to the popular songs, one note repeated again and again without variation or relief. Watch the so-called dramatic performances of the Indian dancing-girls. They consist of one initial *motif*, reiterated again and again, until the chief guest, bored, gives the signal for departure. There is no reason why the entertainment should last longer any more than why it should have lasted so long. Then open any Eastern book: the Hebrew Bible, the Koran, the 'Arabian Nights,' the 'Laws of Manu'—in all

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you will find sentence following sentence, detail added on to detail, without any more variety of connection than an 'and' or a 'but,' the whole—if whole can be called what has no beginning or end—inorganic, loose, susceptible of infinite extension, like the arches of a cloister, the beads of a fakir's rosary, or a string of camels in a caravan. And the style is a faithful image of the substance, as is shown in the oceanic speculations of Hindu philosophy.

The dome of the Hindu temple is an object-lesson in itself. Each horizontal layer projects a little further in than the one below it, until the two opposite piers of the arch come so close together that they may be joined by a single stone, thus forming a cone, circular or pyramidal. This is the Hindu arch, a symbol of the deductive turn of the Hindu mind, of its conservatism and its lack of resource. Any child playing with toy bricks would hit on this device. The marvel is that the Hindu mind has never outgrown its childish discovery. It has devoted all its energy and ingenuity to the elaboration and embellishment of this primitive arch instead of developing it. It is one more proof of arrested growth.

A writer, commenting on this subject, has well said: 'The parts of the Hindu arch are in stable equilibrium; each stone supports its proper share of the weight, and consequently a well-built Hindu temple may last practically for ever, unless disturbed by the action of external forces.' These words might be applied to the whole of Hindu life. It is a pyramid in which the individual stones count for nothing, and serve only to support each other: witness the constitution of Indian society. Its unit is not the individual, or even the family, but the village. The principle on which it rests is the sacrifice of man to the community. The manner in which this principle manifests itself is a tyrannous control of each member of the community by the whole. It is a primitive constitution, characteristic of all human society in its infancy, but in India elaborated and amplified as scrupulously as everything else. The village, with its hundred sleepless

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and highly inquisitive eyes, watches every one of its inhabitants day and night, and everyone feels that he or she is expected to eat and drink, to dress and undress, to bathe, pray, get married, and die according to the rules sanctioned by authority, hallowed by antiquity, and obeyed by the whole world implicitly. A breach of any one of these rules is visited with a social ostracism more terrible than death. In an Indian village he is the most virtuous who is most like everyone else.

From this broad, flat, eternal basis rise, tier after tier, the social castes, culminating in the absolute monarch who derives his authority from heaven. The principal, perhaps the sole, merit of this system, as of the temple, is its stability. 'It may last practically for ever, unless disturbed by the action of external forces.'

Turn wherever you may, you are confronted with proofs of feminine passivity and fecundity, and of the absence of all virile masterfulness or independence. The very trees in this part of the world are apt to grow on the communal system. Each of them consists of a multitude of stems, the whole spreading abroad instead of aspiring upward. If I were asked to name a symbol of Hindu life, I should choose, not the palm, but the banyan-tree.

Industry applied to the infinitely small, subtlety wasted on the infinitely insignificant, earnestness revealing itself in infantile *naïveté*—these are the virtues of the Eastern soul, and the result is infinitely absurd.

The East has no genius. For, in truth, genius is a form of divine egotism; and the Asiatic has no more conception of the Ego than a man has in a dream.

All this resolves itself into conservatism on one hand and into uniformity on the other; conscientious obedience to authority, blind adherence to tradition. Your very servants show this tendency; slow to learn the slightest innovation, they are even slower to unlearn an old habit. They were born to move in a procession, each doing a limited task, and doing it thoroughly, so long

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as he is allowed to do it in the manner in which his forefathers did it before the Flood.

The material is here, and the industry to work upon it; also the sincerity, such as one can have who has never learnt what it is to be himself; yet the work of art is not produced. You can bring yourself to admire Indian architecture, sculpture, or painting by a mental wrench; but if you are candid, if you are true to your ideals of beauty, you will feel bound to say: 'Verily, India has no Art.' To say what my platitudinarian friend is fond of saying, that there are different conceptions of beauty, is tantamount to saying that there are different conceptions of health or of truth, which is manifest nonsense. Emerson realized these defects of the Eastern mind, as shrewdly as he realized so much else, when he said: 'All our great debt to the Oriental world is of this kind, not utensils and statues of the precious metal, but bullion and gold-dust.'

Before the Oriental can become an artist he must become an individual man, and, in order to become an individual man, he must become a dissenter; he must learn to say 'No.' As it is, he is only capable of assent. Hence an unlimited faculty for self-suppression and self-abasement, and an utter absence of the desire for self-expression or the ability for self-reverence.

All this is mightily puzzling and irritating at first. In face of this life you experience a curious kind of dislocation—you feel as if you suddenly found yourself in another man's clothes. The world around you and its inhabitants are strange; the perspective is new; the standards of judgment of beauty, of music, of morals, the customs and costumes and colours, the men, beasts, birds, and plants, the scales on which things natural and things human are built, are all novel. You move in a world unfamiliar, unreal, and fantastic, like a fancy-dress ball or a dyspeptic dream.

But by degrees you come to understand this world and to tolerate it, for admire it you cannot. It is a carnival of the grotesque—viewed from without; but when these

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things, which offend the Western eye, are viewed in relation to their environment, they are found to possess, not, indeed, the harmony of a Greek temple, but the harmony of all that is natural and consistent with itself. All these features are as natural to India as is the elephant. It is the presence of the white man that makes them look grotesque, by contrast. He is a stain on the landscape, a defiance of Nature's laws, a sort of an indignity to the Creator.

You acquire this comprehension and tolerance in the best possible way—by considering the effect of environment and climate upon yourself, and then multiplying it by several thousand generations. You find that, after a few hot seasons in India, you have lost much of the springiness and spontaneity which, perhaps, once animated you. You are never wrought to any high pitch of enthusiasm. Your likings and your dislikings grow less vehement; your mind loses in intensity what it may have gained in extension; your temperament is attuned to the limitlessness of the landscape, and the leisured languor of the life around you. Time and space lose their meaning, and your spirit is rocked to a rest which you are inclined to call soul-soothing or soul-searing, according to the mood of the moment. You discover in yourself a faculty for slow, minute elaboration, which you had never suspected. On the other hand, gone is that divine frenzy—that fever of the brain which made you forget meals by day and sleep by night: it is gone from you for ever. No more travails of the soul, no more new births, but a patient upbringing of such offspring as the mortals may have already inflicted upon you.

Yet this state of things also has its charm, though it may be only the charm of sleep. Why try to wake the man of the East? Why disturb the equilibrium of the social arch which he loves? His existence, viewed from within, is so perfect, so well rounded off, so full of poetic unity—so much nearer to that terrible Power which acts by law, taking no account of individuals, and, therefore,

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philosophically, so much superior to ours. If it lacks the beauty of progress, it possesses the fascination of permanence. And yet, is not permanence too dearly purchased, if the price to be paid for it is self-abasement?

This Hindu conservatism, the Old Resident informs me, has been immensely strengthened by the triumphs of the Japanese, and dreams are now dreamed in Hindustan of a new civilization, wholly Eastern and untainted by the coarse materialism of the West, to which India will supply the thought, China the ethics, and Japan the artistic expression. The hope, if vain, is perfectly legitimate. They who possess nothing in the present have the best right to claim a portion of the future.

THE END

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